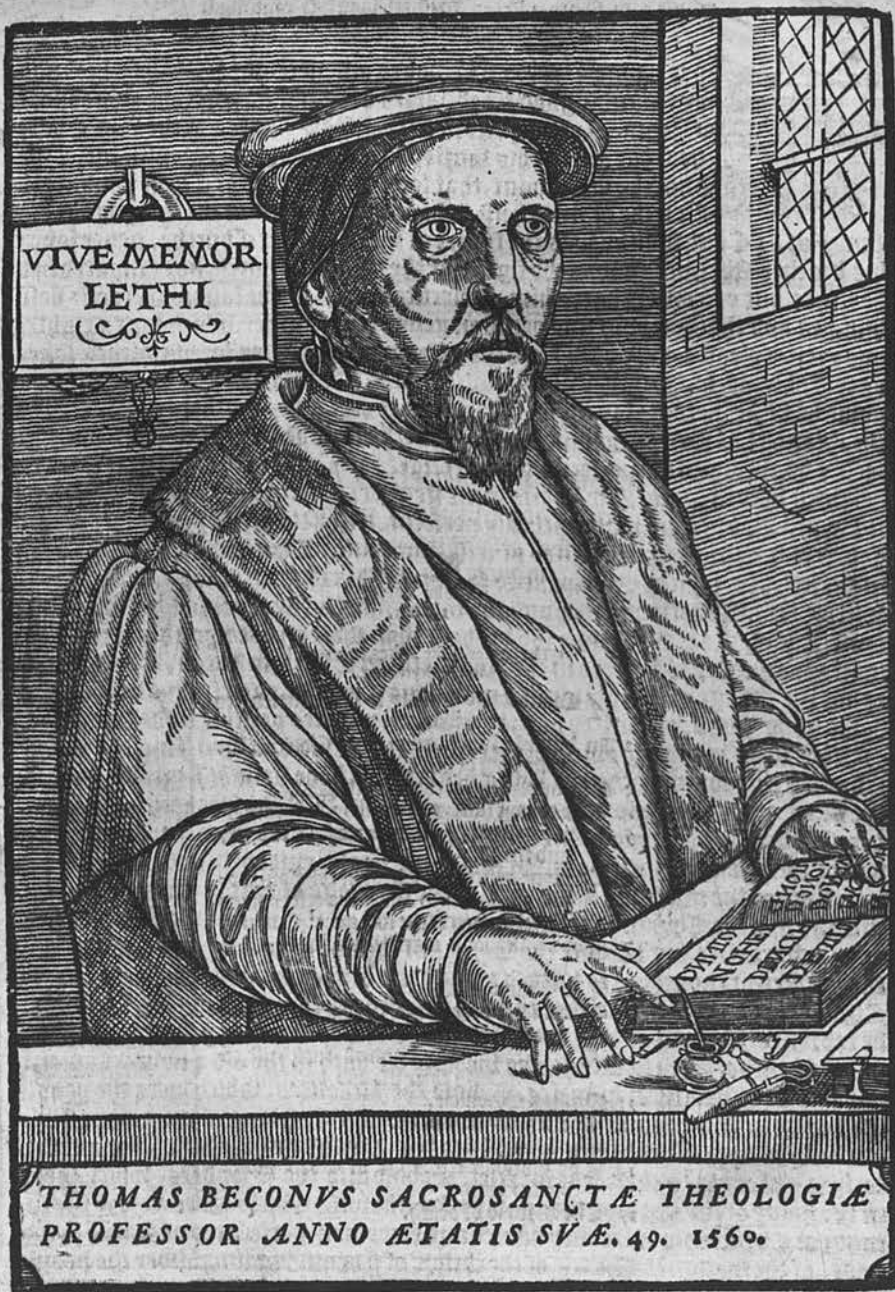


THE ENGLISH REFORMATION  
AS REFLECTED IN THE  
LIFE AND WORKS  
OF  
THOMAS BECON  
1512 - 1567



*Ora expressa vides, viuos imitantia vultus,  
Quod potuit calimo, pictor, & arte vides.  
Mentis quam nullus potuit tibi reddere pictor,  
Effigiem scriptis, præbuit ipse suis.*



THOMAS BECON

Portrait from the folio edition  
of his works,

1560.

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1512-1567.

being a thesis  
submitted for the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy  
in the  
University of Edinburgh

by

DERRICK SHERWIN BAILEY

1947



TO

MY FATHER AND MOTHER

## CONTENTS

Abbreviations	page viii
Preface	xi
Chapter 1. Early years and University Life, 1512-1531.	1
Chapter 2. From Ordination to first Recantation, 1532-1541.	45
Chapter 3. Retirement into Kent and second Recantation, 1541-1543.	78
Chapter 4. Wanderings in the Midlands, 1543-1547.	173
Chapter 5. The Reign of Edward VI, 1547-1553.	203
Chapter 6. Imprisonment and Exile, 1553-1558.	285
Chapter 7. Canon of Canterbury, 1559-1567.	358
Chapter 8. Thomas Becon the Reformer.	404
Chapter 9. Thomas Becon the Writer.	443



Chapter 10. The Man and his Family.	page 455
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#### Detached Notes:

A. Biographical Material.	465
B. The Date of Thomas Becon's Birth.	471
C. Becon's Academical Career.	474
D. Becon's Ordination and first Preferment.	476
E. A select collation of the 1542 and folio editions of the <u>Potation for Lent</u> .	483
F. Becon's Catechism.	486
G. Becon's use of Scripture.	488
Appendix. Commendatory lines in William Turner's <u>A Preservative or Triacle...</u>	491

#### Genealogical Tables:

1. Thomas Becon's Family.	492
2. Inter-relations of Dedicatees of Becon's Works.	493
Chronological Table.	494

#### Bibliographies:

I. Thomas Becon's Works.	496
II. Works quoted or mentioned in the course of this Study.	514

## ILLUSTRATIONS

Thomas Becon: portrait from  
the folio edition of his  
works, 1560.

Frontispiece.

Title-page of A New Pathway  
unto Prayer, by  
'Theodore Basille'.  
First edition, 1542.

Facing page 85.

Thomas Becon in 1553: from  
the Relics of Rome,  
1563 edition.

Facing page 285.

Facsimile of Thomas Becon's  
letter to Archbishop  
Parker.

Facing page 402.

## ABBREVIATIONS

For details of works  
see Bibliography II.

Ames <u>Typ.Ant.</u>	Joseph Ames, <u>Typographical Antiquities</u> , ed. Dibdin.
Bale <u>Catalogus.</u>	John Bale, <u>Scriptorum Illustrium Maioris Britanniae Catalogus.</u>
Bale <u>Index.</u>	John Bale, <u>Index Britanniae Scriptorum</u> , ed. Poole and Bateson.
Bib.	Bibliography.
Burnet <u>Reformation.</u>	Gilbert Burnet, <u>History of the Reformation.</u>
Cooper <u>Athenae.</u>	C.H. and T.Cooper, <u>Athenae Cantabrigienses.</u>
<u>DNB</u>	<u>Dictionary of National Biography.</u>
Dixon <u>HCE.</u>	R.W.Dixon, <u>History of the Church of England.</u>
F.	Thomas Becon's <u>Works</u> — Folio edition 1560-64.
Foxe.	John Foxe, <u>Acts and Monuments.</u>
<u>Formularies.</u>	<u>Formularies of Faith, Henry VIII</u> , ed. Chas. Lloyd.
Garrett <u>Exiles.</u>	C.H.Garrett, <u>The Marian Exiles.</u>

Gee and Hardy <u>Documents</u>	H. Gee and W. J. Hardy, <u>Documents Illustrative of English Church History.</u>
Hennesy <u>Nov. Repert.</u>	G. Hennesy, <u>Novum Repertorium Ecclesiasticum Parochiale Londinense.</u>
<u>ICC</u>	<u>International Critical Commentary.</u>
<u>L &amp; P</u>	<u>Letters and Papers.</u>
Le Neve <u>Fasti.</u>	J. le Neve, <u>Fasti Ecclesiae Anglicanae.</u>
Newcourt <u>Repertorium.</u>	R. Newcourt, <u>Repertorium Ecclesiasticum Parochiale Londinense.</u>
<u>Orig. Let.</u>	<u>Original Letters relative to the English Reformation</u> , ed. Hastings Robinson, Parker Society.
P.	Thomas Becon's <u>Works</u> — Parker Society edition.
<u>PS</u>	Parker Society.
<u>STC</u>	<u>Short Title Catalogue of English Books, 1475-1640</u> , Pollard and Redgrave.
Strype <u>Annals.</u>	John Strype, <u>Annals of the Reformation.</u>
Strype <u>Aylmer.</u>	John Strype, <u>Life and Acts of John Aylmer.</u>
Strype <u>Cranmer.</u>	John Strype, <u>Memorials of Thomas Cranmer.</u>
Strype <u>Eccl. Mem.</u>	John Strype <sup>pe</sup> , <u>Ecclesiastical Memorials.</u>



Strype Grindal.

John Strype, History of the Life and Acts of Edmund Grindal.

Strype Parker.

John Strype, Life and Acts of Matthew Parker.

Tanner.

Thomas Tanner, Bibliotheca Britannico-Hibernia.

Troubles.

A Brieff discours off the troubles begonne at Franckford (1845 reprint of 1575 Black Letter edition).

Venn Alumni.

J. Venn, Alumni Cantabrigienses.

## PREFACE

Few contemporary verdicts have been more completely reversed than that passed by his fellow reformers and protestant countrymen upon Thomas Becon. From the scant mention which his life and works now receive at the hands of historians it would hardly be inferred that he was, in his day, a prolific writer of religious tracts and treatises, some of which were for many years 'best-sellers'; a popular preacher whose vigorous sermons were greatly esteemed by those of his own persuasion; and a zealous, if occasionally somewhat uncertain, supporter of the Reformation in England. It is true that he never appears as one of the principal actors in the dramatic events of his time, and that in the end, although marked down for high preferment,<sup>he</sup> was passed over, while many with whom he had borne the rigours of persecution and imprisonment and the hardships of exile were rewarded with deaneries and bishoprics. Nevertheless, he played his part in the religious struggle no less actively than they, and undoubtedly (if only behind the scenes) did not lack influence, while the concern

with which opponents of the Reformation regarded his writings, though no indication of their intrinsic merit, is ample testimony to their vogue and power. The oblivion into which he has fallen contrasts strangely with his former prominence. He has joined that large company of his contemporaries whose names catch our eye as we turn the pages of Foxe or Strype, or delve into the letters and documents of the period — men of whose lives and thought we know nothing; whose part in the great movements of their time, and whose contribution to the success or the failure of those movements, have long ceased to arouse any interest.

For this neglect of Becon it would not be difficult to find reasons. Despite his popularity and enthusiasm he was never really a notable or conspicuous figure among the English reformers, and he never occupied any position of great responsibility — indeed, it may be doubted whether he had the qualities requisite in a religious leader. Though once highly esteemed as a writer, his work is not, on the whole, distinguished by great originality or depth of theological percept-

ion. Occasional flashes of insight, however, are not wanting, and <sup>in</sup>freshness, vigour, and homeliness his style is at times reminiscent of Latimer's, whose preaching made such an impression upon him at Cambridge. But he excelled as a popular and able exponent of Reformation teaching who knew, sometimes only too well, how to attract the attention of the ordinary reader of his day. He was a propagandist — a vociferous shouter of battle-cries and slogans who could kindle the enthusiasm which others were able to turn to account; who appealed to the emotions rather than to the intellect. His ability did not lie conspicuously in the elaboration of reasoned apologetic — he was generally content with simple assertions — but few of his contemporaries surpassed him in the abusive, coarse, and sometimes grossly vulgar polemic which was more congenial to the taste of the sixteenth century than it is to that of the twentieth. And although his fame rested in part upon his devotional writings, these do not stand in the mainstream of Christian tradition, and often reflect the intense but narrow piety of an incipient Puri-



tanism. He was, therefore, essentially the kind of man to make his mark during critical and troubled times, when party feeling ran high; one likely to be both appreciated if not over-valued by his contemporaries, and forgotten by their descendants, to whom he left no notable and permanent legacy either as constructive theologian or as ecclesiastical statesman, and not even a personal memory of great deeds wrought or great sufferings undergone.

Nevertheless, when all allowances have been made, the neglect into which Thomas Becon has been allowed to fall is undeserved and regrettable, and to attempt to redress it is no mere antiquarian labour. He has a claim upon our attention as a vigorous, effective, and influential protagonist of the protestant cause, as a typical English reformed churchman of the period, and as a colourful personality in whose life and works the course and character of the English Reformation is mirrored. It is the object of this study to try to rescue his name from its unmerited oblivion, and to give some account of his part in the reformation of the Church in England.

At the outset it should be said that not least among the difficulties with which the biographer of Thomas Becon has to contend are the elusiveness of his subject and the paucity of the material at his disposal. The latter<sup>1</sup> is not only meagre (which may partly account for the neglect Becon has suffered) but often confused or inaccurate. He appears, perhaps advisedly, to have been reticent about his activities at certain periods, and tells us little of his early life; he is silent upon family matters (apart from mentioning the names of his children) and, so far as I have been able to ascertain, made no will. To the comparatively few facts which can be gleaned from his writings, official and other contemporary records add but little, and several periods of his life are particularly obscure. Although frequently involved in important events, he seems to have remained in the background; hence, as in the case of the Frankfort 'troubles', his precise views and actions cannot always be easily ascertained. Al-

1. The biographical and other material is more fully discussed in Detached Note A.

lowance has to be made for the anti-catholic prejudices of certain early memoir writers and historians, who tend to exaggerate his importance. Finally, the many different spellings of his name causes confusion, which is increased by his finding it necessary at one time in his career to adopt the pseudonym Theodore Basil[le]. Some biographers have complicated this problem by mistaking Thomas Becon for a younger contemporary, John, who was a member of St. John's College, Cambridge, and became Chancellor of Norwich.

Not only has this study provided an opportunity to correct many of the errors which have thus arisen, and which have been perpetuated by uncritical copying, but information is also presented for the first time which throws new light upon the question of Becon's ordination. In addition, much material already accessible in printed records but hitherto unused has been included. Since they are now little known, I have taken the liberty of quoting somewhat freely from his works, and have described the contents of all of them; citations, wherever possible, are from the Parker Soc-

iety edition, but for some works not included therein the folio or another early edition has been used. Where lack of data has compelled me, I have not hesitated to suggest what has seemed to me, after careful consideration, the most probable course of events; such reconstructions have served to bridge the many gaps in the story of Becon's life, and I hope that in every case it will be perfectly clear what is factual and what conjectural. I have tried, and I trust successfully, to avoid writing yet another account of the English Reformation, and have confined myself simply to such events and ideas as are reflected in Becon's life and works.

I wish to express my gratitude to all who have so willingly assisted me in my researches, and first of all to the Revd. Dr. Hugh Watt, Principal of New College, and Professor of Church History in the University of Edinburgh, for his interest, guidance and encouragement. Much had perforce to be done by correspondence, since certain records were inaccessible to me, and I would thank all with whom I have been in touch through the post,



and in particular Miss Irene J. Churchill, Assistant Librarian at Lambeth Palace, Miss Lilian J. Redstone, M.B.E., and the Revd. J. F. Williams, M.A., F.S.A., Rector of South Walsham for their valuable help and patient attention to my numerous enquiries. I also wish to acknowledge with thanks the permission given by the Master and Fellows of Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, for the reproduction of the MS letter from Becon to Archbishop Parker now in their library.

Edinburgh,

September 1947.

SHERWIN BAILEY.

## CHAPTER 1

## EARLY YEARS AND UNIVERSITY LIFE

1512-1531

## I

We do not know for certain when or where Thomas Becon was born, nor can much be discovered about his parents and their circumstances. A remark in the preface to the folio edition of his works reveals that he came from Norfolk, and suggests that his home was probably on the west side of the county, where sheep at that time abounded:

That sheep in my country of Norfolk is always chosen to be belwether, which is the goodliest and strongest in all the flock.<sup>1</sup>

The date of his birth cannot be determined exactly,

1. P i, p.9. cf also Strype Aylmer, p.5; Bale Catalogus, p.756 ["patria Nordovolgus"]; and an allusion by Becon in The Fortress of the Faithful, P ii, p.596. Strype Cranmer, i, p.607, followed by Brook, Lives of the Puritans, i, p.166, and by others, gives Becon's birthplace as Suffolk, due no doubt to confusion with John Becon, who was born there (Venn Alumni,

but there is good reason to think that it occurred between 25 March 1512 and 24 March 1512-13.<sup>1</sup> His father probably died while Becon was still young, for his mother, who married again, lost her second husband in 1546.<sup>2</sup> He seems to have depended for advancement upon his writings and the active and enthusiastic support of the Reformation which commended him to his patrons, from which it may be inferred that his family were by no means influential. Nor is it likely that his parents were well-to-do, for the shadow of poverty which overclouded most of his life suggests that he inherited little or nothing from them and possessed no means of his own. Nowhere in his works does he

I, i, p. 114). The dedication of the Commonplaces of the Holy Scripture to "my dear countrymen and faithful ministers of the Gospel of Jesu Christ, watching and attending upon the Lord's flock in the parishes of Norfolk and Suffolk" (P iii, p. 290) is explained by the fact that the Norwich diocese then embraced both counties.

1. See Detached Note B. For accuracy and ease of reference I have given all dates in the Old Style.
2. The Jewel of Joy, P 11, p. 426.

mention brothers or sisters, and his being summoned home on the death of his step-father to be the "staff" of his mother's old age<sup>1</sup> may mean that he was an only son, if not an only child. His younger contemporary, John Becon, may have been some relation.

It seems likely that Becon's early life was passed amid humble surroundings in some quiet west-Norfolk village, not indeed too secluded to feel the impact of new ideas, yet conservative enough, as the village usually is, to cling somewhat tenaciously to old ones. This at least is suggested by the probability that the religious opinions of his later years may have owed not a little to impressions received during boyhood. The social stratum to which we have supposed that he belonged, for instance, was that in which the condemned doctrines of Lollardism had principally survived, and he may well have heard from time to time among his elders the surreptitious talk which

1. ibid.



occasionally blazed up into open and fanatical preaching of communism and anti-clericalism.<sup>1</sup>

This, however, is not the only influence for which allowance ought to be made. Before Becon was ten years old, Luther's writings and teaching had begun to circulate in England, and especially in East Anglia. To the coast towns of Norfolk and Suffolk came the vessels of the Hanse traders, bearing, in addition to their merchandise, the books of the Reformer and news of the events in Germany. As Lutheran opinions spread, sympathizers sprang up everywhere in the Eastern Counties.

There can hardly be any doubt that the young boy

1. At the beginning of the sixteenth century there seems to have been a revival of Lollardism — heresy then could hardly denote anything else. Foxe records the burning (branding ?) of heretics under Richard Nicke, Bishop of Norwich, in the cathedral city in 1507 and 1511, at Eccles in 1510, and at Ipswich and Eye in 1512 (Acts and Monuments, iv, pp.126 and 773). Elsewhere, five heretics suffered in 1511 under Archbishop Warham (ibid, v, p.647) and two in the autumn of the same year under FitzJames, Bishop of London (ibid, iv, pp.180-181, 214-216). During 1510-1511 FitzJames compelled twenty-seven heretics to abjure (ibid, iv, p.174) and Warham thirty-four (ibid, v, p.652).

learnt something of the excitement and its cause, and on the eve of his departure to Cambridge he may have been among those who thronged to hear Thomas Bilney during his preaching tour in the spring of 1526-27.

Thus it was perhaps not without good reason that at the University Becon found Latimer's preaching congenial, and became so assiduous a hearer and student of his sermons.<sup>1</sup> Of himself, however, he only says,

...I have been from my youth studious of the holy scripture...<sup>2</sup>

He acknowledges no formative influences during childhood or boyhood, and his writings contain no allusions to events or persons, such as might afford some clue to his early life. Not until we come to the years which he spent at Cambridge have we any certain information about Becon, and of

1. The Jewel of Joy, P ii, p.424.

2. The New Year's Gift, P i, p.309, from where Bale's statement, "professione theologus ab ipsa adolescentia" (Catalogus p.756) is apparently taken.

them we can learn a little from his own pen.

## II

Thomas Becon probably entered the University in March 1526-27<sup>1</sup> at the customary age of fourteen or fifteen. It is generally asserted that he was a member of St. John's College,<sup>2</sup> founded by the Lady Margaret to replace the ancient Hospital of the Brethren of St. John, and opened little more than ten years before he went into residence. The authority upon which this is based, however, cannot be discovered, and it must remain no more than a reasonable assumption.<sup>3</sup>

It was about this time that the full force

1. See Detached Note B.

2. Ayre, Preface P 1, p.vii; Cooper, Athenae, 1, p.246; Venn Alumni, I,1, p.114.

3. Venn lists ten Becons or Beacons (excluding Thomas), and of these, four were members of St. John's College, including his son Theodore. This may perhaps account for the assumption that Thomas was also a member of that College.

and significance of the reaction at Cambridge against the aridity of a decadent scholasticism and the corruption of the mediaeval Church was becoming apparent, and on his arrival the young freshman found party feeling running high. This reaction has often erroneously been attributed to Lutheran influences, for when the doctrines of the Reformer reached the University the ground in which they took root had already been prepared, and they met with a sympathetic reception from a small but enthusiastic group of scholars.

In 1509 or 1510, probably attracted by its comparatively liberal attitude to the new Greek studies, Desiderius Erasmus came to Cambridge for the second time, and through the influence of Fisher secured the privilege of residence in Queen's College. There, in the room at the top of the south-west tower in the old court, traditionally supposed to have been his, the great scholar pursued those studies of Jerome and the texts of the New Testament which were to bear such notable fruit; while in the schools he began, in October 1511, his lectures in Greek. Shortly afterwards he



was appointed to succeed Burgoyne as Lady Margaret Professor, a post he continued to hold during the whole time of his residence at the University. Despite the influence which he exerted upon the younger men, among whom he had a considerable following, and who, in after years, were glad to testify to the value of their intercourse with him, Erasmus seems at the time to have regarded his stay in Cambridge as fruitless. The work which he had hoped to accomplish had not prospered as he had wished, and the cause of Greek studies had made but halting progress. He felt himself disliked and misunderstood, the climate was uncongenial, the townspeople seemed boorish, he was always financially embarrassed, and often depressed by illness. For almost four years he persevered in the face of opposition, until he could bear the situation no longer. In the autumn of 1513 the plague came, and the University was gradually abandoned; and when the danger was passed and men began to return, the Lady Margaret Professor, one of the last to leave, was not among them.

Yet in his less pessimistic moments Erasmus

could take a more favourable view of the position. Writing to Servatius in the year in which he left Cambridge, he described the University as adapting itself, like that of Paris, to the tendencies of the age, and receiving the meliores litterae, not with hostility, but with friendly courtesy. And three years later, in a letter written from Fisher's palace at Rochester to a former pupil, Henry Bullock, he contrasted the Cambridge of 1516 with that of thirty years previous, saying significantly,

...it has flourished to such a degree that it can now compete with the chief universities of the age, and can boast of men in comparison with whom theologians of the old school seem only ghosts of theologians.

It was to some of these men, trained in the traditions of humanism, that the reaction at Cambridge owed its beginnings.

Erasmus' labours during 1509-1513 were destined to have results which he had not foreseen, and of which he would certainly have disapproved. The fruit of what he described as his vigiliae, his midnight toil in the tower room at Queen's,

appeared in 1516, when the Novum Instrumentum was issued at Basle from the press of Frobenius. It was eagerly bought and studied and openly discussed, especially in the University where so much of it had been composed, and upon one young scholar at least it had a profound effect. Thomas Bilney, who had entered Trinity Hall soon after Erasmus' departure, has recorded in a famous passage how, at a crisis in his spiritual experience, he at last

...heard speak of Jesus, even then when the New Testament was first set forth by Erasmus,

and at the first reading found a peace which confessions, fastings, vigils, pardons, masses and pilgrimages had failed to bring. Imparting to others the secret of his new-found hope, it was not long before Bilney, despite a retiring disposition, came to be recognized as the leading spirit among those who were impatient of the old superstitions and errors. His influence, exerted quietly and unobtrusively, was soon felt throughout Cambridge, and Foxe justly styles him "the first

framer of the universitie in the knowledge of Christ".

All Saints' Day 1517 is a memorable date in Reformation history, for at noon on that day Martin Luther nailed his Ninety-five Theses to the door of the Castle church at Wittenberg. Cambridge, however, may not unfairly dispute with the German university the honour of having been the scene of the first public protest against Leo X's proclamation of indulgences. Fisher, as Chancellor, caused a copy of the proclamation to be affixed to the gate of the common schools. The same night a young Norman student, Peter de Valence, less bold than the Professor of Wittenberg, wrote across it the words from the fortieth psalm,

Beatus vir, cujus est nomen Domini spes  
ejus: et non respexit in vanitates et in-  
sanias falsas istas.

The offender was ordered to come forward and confess to his deed, but de Valence would not reveal himself, and sentence of excommunication was



pronounced.<sup>1</sup> Whether this protest was made before Luther's, or not, cannot be determined, but one thing is certain: it was not inspired by Lutheran teaching. On the contrary, it was, so far as we know, the first open and unmistakable indication of the strength of reformation feeling in Cambridge — and that feeling must be ascribed principally to the unobtrusive influence of Thomas Bilney.

It is not without interest that Bilney, himself a Norfolk man, found sympathy and support chiefly among those who came from Thomas Becon's county — Thomas Forman and John Lambert of Queen's, Nicholas Shaxton of Gonville Hall, John Thixtill of Pembroke, and Robert Barnes, prior of the Augustinian friars. These, with others such as George Stafford, fellow of Pembroke, and Thomas

1. It is said, though on doubtful authority, that later de Valence made full confession, and after receiving absolution, set up over the gate of the schools Ps.xxv.7: "Delicta juventutis meae, et ignorantias meas ne memineris". Cooper Athenae, i, p.155; cf Mullinger, The University of Cambridge, i, p.557.

Arthur, William Paget, and Richard Smith, of St. John's, extended a warm welcome to the writings of Martin Luther when they began to appear in 1520. The small group of Cambridge reformers, nick-named 'Germans', selected for their meetings the White Horse Inn. This house, soon notorious in the University as 'Germany', was chosen, says Strype,

...because they of King's College, Queen's College, and St. John's, might come in with the more privacy at the back door.<sup>1</sup>

There, under the presidency of Barnes, Luther's works were studied and discussed, though his doctrine was not always approved.<sup>2</sup>

At length the proceedings at the White Horse and the spread of Lutheran opinions in the University began to excite the apprehensions of the

1. Parker, i, p.12; cf Eccl.Mem., I,i, p.568.
2. Mullinger, op.cit., i, p.574, erroneously supposes that Becon attended these gatherings, and that he refers to them in the Jewel of Joy (P ii, p.426: "So oft as I was in their company..... learned men"). This passage relates, of course, to the times spent by Becon at Baxterley during his sojourn in the Midlands, in company with Glover, Latimer, and their friends, see below, p.190-191.

authorities, but Wolsey, from motives both of tolerance and expediency, refused to appoint a commission of enquiry. Unfortunately an indiscreet sermon preached by Barnes on Christmas Eve, 1525, in St. Edward's church caused the Cardinal, whom he had attacked, to take a different view. A search for Lutheran books was conducted, and the impetuous Prior was arrested, taken to London, tried, and compelled to recant at St. Paul's.

This set-back, however, was balanced by the adherence to the 'Germans' in 1524 of Hugh Latimer, fellow of Clare College. Steadfastly and even violently opposed to the new doctrines, he took advantage of the opportunity afforded by the regulations for the degree of Bachelor of Divinity which he was then approaching, to attack the teachings of Melancthon. Bilney, who heard this discourse and knew the speaker for a determined upholder of the old ways, resolved to try to convert him. His method was judiciously conceived. Avoiding the customary but unprofitable course of a disputation with Latimer in the schools, he sought him in the privacy of his own study, with

the request that he would hear his confession. Latimer acceded, and heard from Bilney the story of his despair and the means by which it had been banished, and hope and peace restored. Latimer afterwards declared,

By his confession I learned more than before in many years. So from that time forward I began to smell the word of God, and forsook the school-doctors and such fooleries.<sup>1</sup>

In no long time the news of his conversion was all over the University, and his character and reputation gave to the reformers a position which before they had lacked. He became Bilney's constant companion; together they were to be seen in earnest converse as they walked the 'Heretics' Hill', as it was known; together they visited prisoners and the sick, and preached in the lazar-cots.

Latimer did not long avoid conflict with the authorities. The suspicions of West, Bishop of Ely, were aroused, but coming unexpectedly to a

1. Sermons (PS), pp. 334-335.



university sermon by Latimer in St. Mary's, in the hope of detecting some heterodoxy, his manoeuvre was adroitly countered by the preacher, who observed that "a new audience, especially of such rank, deserves a new theme", and treated the episcopal visitor to a discourse upon the life of Christ as the pattern to which all clergy should try to conform. Unable to complain of unorthodoxy or impropriety in Latimer's sermon, and failing to trap him with a request that he should preach against Luther, West gave vent to his annoyance soon after by inhibiting him from preaching in the University or diocese. The episcopal veto did not apply to the church of the Augustinian friars, however, and while Barnes was delivering his unfortunate Christmas Eve address in St. Edward's, Latimer was occupying the Prior's pulpit. Eventually he was called to account by Wolsey, but his temperate and scholarly bearing gained him very lenient treatment at the Cardinal's hands. He was discharged "after a gentle monition" with the words,

If the Bishop of Ely cannot abide such

doctrine as you have here repeated, you shall have my licence, and shall preach it unto his beard, let him say what he will.

The reaction prepared by Erasmus and initiated by Bilney had by this time taken on a pronouncedly Lutheran colouring, and had developed in a way which the great humanist had never anticipated. The strength and character of the reformation movement at Cambridge is indicated by the history of the students who accepted Wolsey's invitation to migrate to Oxford and make their home in Cardinal College. They were some of the ablest among the young men, and most of them seem to have belonged to the party of Bilney and Latimer. Into their new university, which had prided itself hitherto upon its conservatism and orthodoxy, they introduced the Lutheran doctrines. Adopting with somewhat more circumspection than the Cambridge men the methods which had proved successful there, they had the satisfaction of seeing their influence gradually but steadily grow. Several colleges became infected, and at last the plague was traced to its source in the Cardinal's "most godly college". Wolsey, who had shown himself tolerant of the re-

formers at Cambridge, took a different view when the reputation of his new foundation was threatened, and all who were convicted of possessing Lutheran books were thrown into prison. Attention was then turned to the fountainhead of Lutheran influence, and Cambridge, now stirred by Tyndale's vernacular New Testament with its Prologues which displayed unmistakably the teaching of the German reformer, was subjected to a rigorous investigation.

### III

Such was the state of affairs when Thomas Becon entered the University. He describes himself as

...a poor scholar....very desirous to have the knowledge of good letters...

but tells us little of the conditions in Cambridge and of his life there; in fact, most of the long passage in the Jewel of Joy which relates to this period consists of a panegyric upon Latimer

and Stafford.<sup>1</sup>

Becon was diligent in his attendance at Latimer's sermons:

...in the time of my being [at Cambridge], this godly man preached many learned and christian sermons both in the Latin and English tongue, at the which all I for most part was present; and, although at that time I was but a child of sixteen years, yet I noted his doctrine so well as I could, partly reposing it in my memory, partly commending it to letters, as most faithful treasures unto memory.

Indeed, he declares that to Latimer,

...next unto God I am specially bound to give most hearty thanks for the knowledge, if any I have, of God and of his most blessed word.

There follows in Becon's account a summary of Latimer's teaching in his sermons, and a vivid description of his preaching and its effect:

He spake nothing but it left as it were certain pricks or stings in the hearts of the

1. The account of Cambridge, from which the following quotations are taken (The Jewel of Joy, P ii, pp.424-426) is put into the mouth Christopher, and not into that of Philemon, who usually represents Becon, but there is no doubt that Becon's experiences and views are recorded.



hearers, which moved them to consent to his doctrine. None, except they were stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart, went away from his sermons which were not led with a faithful repentance of their former life, affected with high detestation of sin, and moved unto all godliness and virtue. I did know certain men which, through the persuasion of their friends, went unto his sermons swelling, blown full, and puffed up like unto Esop's frog, with envy and malice against him; but when they returned, the sermon being done, and demanded how they liked him and his doctrine? they answered with the bishops' and Pharisees' servants: Nunquam sic locutus est homo, sicut hic homo: "There was never man that spake like unto this man".

Becon's accuracy has been challenged by Wharton, who, commenting upon the statement,

I was present when, with manifest authorities of God's word and arguments invincible, besides the allegations of doctors, he proved in his sermons, that the holy scriptures ought to be read in the English tongue of all christian people, whether they were priests or laymen, as they be called...

says,

Good Mr. Becon did herein either want true information, or hath imposed upon his readers.<sup>1</sup>

1. Strype Cranmer, ii, pp.1058-1059 — Wharton's 'Observations' upon the Memorials.

He goes on to assert that Latimer, so far from maintaining this doctrine, joined with the bishops and others in condemning the circulation of the scriptures in the vernacular by signing the proclamation issued after the conference at Westminster Palace in May 1530. But Wharton has completely misinterpreted Latimer's part in this affair. His name was appended to the proclamation with those of the others who had taken part in the deliberations, but there is no indication that this was done by his wish, or that he approved of the decision reached. His consistent attitude in demanding the Bible in the common tongue, and the bold appeal which he addressed not long afterwards to Henry VIII urging him to give immediate effect to his promise that an authorized version should be prepared as soon as the time was ripe, are sufficient to vindicate Latimer. But there seems to be no record of his preaching in favour of the English Bible, although Foxe says that he did so in one of the 'Card' sermons not now extant.<sup>1</sup> It

1. Acts and Monuments, vii, p.438.

would have been strange, however, had he not at some time alluded to the subject from the Cambridge pulpits, and there would seem to be no cause to doubt the accuracy of Becon's memory.

It is not improbable that the young student came into more intimate relation with the preacher whom he so much admired. The tribute which he pays to Latimer's influence suggests this, and it may be with grateful recollection of assistance of a more material kind that he records

...how beneficial he was, according to his possibility, to poor scholars and other needy people.

The enquiries which had been going on during the whole of Thomas Becon's first year, in an endeavour to trace the heretical opinions to their source, culminated in Wolsey's summoning three of the most prominent reformers to appear and answer for themselves before the Chapter at Westminster. Two, Bilney and his associate Thomas Arthur, complied, and were examined at length. The latter admitted having advocated preaching by laymen, but

denied that he had condemned the worship of images and the invocation of saints, and that he had exhorted the people to pray for all who had been committed to prison on account of their religious beliefs. Bilney, accused of inveighing against pilgrimages and supposed miracles, and of attacking the higher clergy, proved somewhat obdurate. Taxed by Wolsey with failure to honour the undertaking made at his first recantation that

...he would not preach, rehearse, or defend any of Luther's opinions, but would impugn the same everywhere...

he attempted to excuse himself by the quibble that the oath which he took was not administered judicially (judicialiter). To Tunstal, who thrice urged him to submit, he wrote the letters in which his spiritual experiences and conversion are so poignantly described. It seemed as if he were determined not to yield, but in the end the persuasions of his friends prevailed, and he recanted the second time. On Sunday, 8 December 1527, he and Arthur together bore their fagots in procession at Paul's Cross, after which Bilney was committed to



prison for a year. The third offender, George Joye, was able to elude the authorities and, leaving the other two "poore shepe" to their fate at the hands of the "cruel wolves", succeeded, with the aid of a little prevarication, in making good his escape to the Continent.<sup>1</sup>

Before Bilney's release and return to Cambridge, the reforming party had suffered a severe loss by the death of George Stafford. Becon, who quotes a proverb current in the University many years after:

When Master Stafford read, and Master Latimer preached, then was Cambridge blessed,

describes him as

...a man of a very perfect life, and (if I may so speak) of an angelic conversation, approvedly learned in the Hebrew, Greek, and Latin tongues, and such one as had, through his painful labours, obtained singular knowledge in the mysteries of God's most blessed word.

1. For an account of Joye's activities at this time, see Maitland, Essays on the Reformation in England, pp. 4-12.

He seems to have attended the lectures which Stafford delivered as Lady Margaret Reader in Divinity, and writes of them thus:

...as he beautified the letters of blessed Paul with his godly expositions,<sup>1</sup> so likewise did he learnedly set forth in his lectures the native sense and true understanding of the four evangelists, vividly restoring unto us the apostle's mind, and the mind of those holy writers, which so many years before had been unknown and obscured through the darkness and mists of the Pharisees and papists.

In his mood of enthusiastic reminiscence he even doubts whether Stafford was more bound to St. Paul

...for leaving those godly epistles behind him, to instruct and teach the congregation of God....,

or the Apostle to his expositor for setting forth his meaning so plainly and simply, and no longer obscured with

...the foolish fantasies and elvish exposit-

1. Latimer gives a specimen of Stafford's exposition in the seventh Sermon on the Lord's Prayer, Sermons (PS), pp. 440-441.

ions of certain doting doctors, and, as it were, drowned in the dirty dregs of the drowsy duncers.<sup>1</sup>

Stafford met his end in the discharge of those charitable offices for which Bilney and his friends were noted. A master of arts named Henry residing in St. Clement's Hostel had succumbed to the plague, and Stafford, disregarding his personal safety, visited him in order to persuade him, even though it were on his death-bed, to renounce the necromantic practices for which he was notorious. His mission was successful; Sir Henry repented, and the conjuring books were burnt. But the conversion cost Stafford his life. Returning home, he was himself attacked by the plague, and within a few hours passed away.

The tension in the University, which had been steadily growing during Becon's first two years, reached its climax towards the end of 1529. Among

1. duncers = followers of Duns Scotus. The passage quoted is a typical example of the alliterative invective to which Becon was partial, and of which he made abundant and often effective use.

the "many learned and christian sermons" which he heard Latimer preach, none can have remained more vividly in his memory than those delivered in December of that year in St. Edward's church — the Sermons on the Cards.<sup>1</sup> It is possibly to the concluding passage of the second sermon that Becon alludes when he says,

Neither was I absent when he inveighed against temple-works, good intents, blind zeal, superstitious devotion, &c.; as the painting of tabernacles, gilding of images, setting up of candles, running on pilgrimages, and such other idle inventions of men,<sup>2</sup> whereby the glory of God was obscured, and the works of mercy the less regarded.

If so, he fails to bring out clearly Latimer's point, which was simply that voluntary works are not to be preferred above works of mercy.

1. For an account of these sermons see Demaus, Hugh Latimer, pp.81-86; for the text itself, Latimer's Sermons (PS), pp.3-24.
2. cf Latimer's list of "will-works", as Becon calls them: "...to build churches, to give ornaments to God and his altar, to gild saints...", Sermons (PS), p.22; "setting up candles, gilding and painting, building of churches, giving of ornaments, going on pilgrimages, making of highways...", ibid, p.23.



Evermore bestow the greatest part of thy goods in works of mercy, and the less part in voluntary works...;

the latter

...be of themselves marvellous good, and convenient to be done...

but

...if men be so foolish of themselves, that they will bestow<sup>w</sup> the most part of their goods in voluntary works, which they be not bound to keep, but willingly and by their devotion; and leave the necessary works undone, which they are bound to do; they and all their voluntary works are like to go unto everlasting damnation.

Perhaps from a lapse of memory, but more probably for polemical reasons, Becon fails to indicate Latimer's precise position at this time:

No doubt the voluntary works be good and ought to be done; but yet they must be so done, that by their occasion the necessary works and the works of mercy be not decayed and forgotten.<sup>1</sup>

1. ibid, p.23; of his first Sermon to the Convocation of 1536, Sermons (PS), p.37; his episcopal Injunctions of 1537, Remains (PS), p.243; and a letter to Archbishop Warham, ibid, p.353, where his position is clearly stated.

Latimer never condemned the doing of voluntary works supplementary to those of mercy or necessity, but only the doctrine of merit attached by the mediaeval Church to such works, and the consequent tendency to regard them as the easier way of earning merit.

Latimer's attitude to pilgrimages and costly gifts aroused the hostility of those who stood opposed to the principles of his party, and Buckenham, Prior of the Dominicans, in a not too felicitous imitation, attempted to confound him with a sermon on the game of dice. This only called forth a crushing retort which disposed of the Prior,<sup>1</sup> but others took up his cause — the Bishop of Ely from the pulpit at Barnwell Priory, John Venetus<sup>2</sup> from that of St. Mary's church, and Baynes, Briganden, and Greenwood, of St. John's, among others — and the University found itself divided into two warring factions. Becon, who possibly alludes to

1. See Demaus, op.cit., pp. 86-87.

2. Cooper Athenae, i, p. 40.

Buckenham and his supporters when he says that

...divers drowsy duncers, with certain false flying flattering friars...openly in their unsavoury sermons resisted [Latimer's] godly purpose...<sup>1</sup>

must soon have found himself in the centre of the storm. He was, as we have seen, probably a member of St. John's College, and the animosity which that foundation in particular displayed towards Latimer can have made the lot of his sympathizers there no easy one. Here Becon perhaps experienced a fore-taste of the persecution to come, and learnt also the value of caution and the art of 'lying low' which was to serve him in good stead in the future. The controversy was allayed by the arrival of a letter dated 24 January 1529-30 from Edward Foxe the royal almoner to Dr. Buckmaster the Vice-chancellor, asking him to use all his wisdom and authority to appease the quarrel.

1. The "purpose" here was Latimer's advocacy of the vernacular Bible, to which it seems probable that he had alluded in sermons preached about this time, but no longer extant; see above, p. 21.

It is not unlikely (wrote Foxe) that they of St. John's proceedeth of some private malice towards Mr. Latymer.... Which malice also, peradventure, cometh partly for that Mr. Latymer favoureth the king's cause, and I assure you that it is so reported to the kinge.

As if Becon's years of study had not already been eventful enough, Cambridge was soon to be agitated by a new question which, for the time being, diverted attention from the religious disputes. The "king's cause" — the matter of the divorce of Queen Catherine — to which Foxe alluded in his letter had, during the past two years, been the subject of delicate and tortuous negotiations with the Papacy, which broke down finally on 23 July 1529. Into the unedifying details of the whole transaction, which was the occasion, though certainly not the cause, of the Reformation in England, there is no need to enter here. The case has received the closest scrutiny, and the old view, that the subversion of the mediaeval ecclesiastical order was simply a by-product of the amorous whim of a passionate and headstrong monarch, has been sufficiently discredited. There is no reason to suspect that Henry



did not, in some measure, entertain a genuine doubt as to the legality of his marriage with his deceased brother's widow, even if that doubt were of gradual growth, and prompted in no small degree by concern that there should be a legitimate male heir to succeed him on a throne not yet secure enough to justify the taking of risks. At the same time, account must be taken of the strong, if not easily intelligible, attraction possessed by Anne Boleyn. Political exigencies, however, and particularly the subservience of Pope Clement VII to the Emperor Charles V, the queen's nephew, were to a large extent responsible for the fact that this matrimonial case was not decided as easily as others of a similar kind, and Catherine's firm attitude and unaccommodating refusal to retire into the religious life added complications.

On the adjournment of the legatine court, and the subsequent recall of the cause to Rome, it became imperative that an early decision should be reached. It was at this juncture that Thomas Cranmer's suggestion that the matter be submitted for decision to the universities of Christendom was

conveyed to the king, who saw in it a way out of the impasse. Discreet agents, well versed in the various arts of persuasion, were despatched to the Continent, and Henry, on 16 February 1529-30, addressed "our trusty and well-beloved, the Vice-chancellor, Doctors, and Regentes and Non-Regentes of our Universitie of Cambridge", desiring their opinion whether "*ducere uxorem fratris mortui sine liberis sit prohibitum jure divino et naturali*".

Cranmer's treatise upon the lawfulness of marriage with a brother's wife, published some months previous, would already have familiarized the members of his university with the arguments in the case, and as the question was debated among the senior men, so too it would undoubtedly be discussed by Becon's own contemporaries. The arrival of the king's letter excited fresh interest in the matter, and the tone in which Henry wrote suggests that he had cause to entertain hopes of a favourable reply. Gardiner and Foxe, however, whom he had sent to receive the decision, experienced unexpected difficulty in securing an acceptable answer, as the opposition encountered

proved greater than had been anticipated. Nevertheless, in the end they succeeded in carrying their point, though the decision bore an important qualification:

Quod ducere uxorem fratris mortui sine liberis cognitam a priori viro per carnalem copulam.....est prohibitum jure divino ac naturali.

The opinion thus extorted was received by the king with every appearance of satisfaction, though it was far from popular with the members of the University as a whole:

...all the world almost cryethe oute of Cambridge for this acte, and specially on me,

lamented the Vice-chancellor when he returned from the Court, and the general feeling found expression in rioting, and in animosity against Buckmaster and against Peterhouse, of which he was a fellow.<sup>1</sup> Though we do not know what view Becon took of the business, we may surmise that he was in agreement

1. For a more detailed account, see Mullinger, op.cit., 1, pp.611-622.

with Cranmer and Latimer, and that accordingly he again found himself in a hostile community, for there can be no doubt of the prevailing opinion at St. John's, over which Fisher, who was opposed to the divorce and held aloof from the proceedings at Cambridge, still retained his strong influence.

During Becon's last year at the University events began to move with increasing rapidity. The opinions of the Continental universities started to flow in — most of them favourable to the king. Parliament, the first for six years, had commenced its sittings in the previous November, and simultaneously the Convocation of the Province of Canterbury met. In the deliberations of both, the reform of long-standing ecclesiastical abuses took an important place, and the temper of the Commons disquieted conservatives like Fisher, who entered a strong protest against the spirit and tendencies of some of the proposed legislation. In spite of a general pardon, Wolsey's sun had almost set, and only his death at Leicester Abbey on 29 November 1530 saved him from the crowning ignominy of the executioner's scaffold. The intensification of



nationalistic feeling, the legatine power sought and wielded by the great Cardinal in furtherance of his schemes of reform, and the divorce negotiations (and especially the appeal to the universities) — all pointed to the breakdown of the mediaeval compromise by which state and Church and Papacy had, on the whole, worked harmoniously together.<sup>1</sup> Few can have been aware of the extent of the breakdown, or of what it portended, but signs were not wanting that a conflict was at hand over the question of jurisdiction, the outcome of which was to be the assertion of the royal supremacy.

By contrast with the late excitements, life at Cambridge during 1530 was comparatively uneventful. For the reforming party there were both encouragements and disappointments. They can have derived no little satisfaction from the favour shown by Henry to their leader, Latimer, who was invited to Windsor, and on the second Sunday in

1. See F.M.Powicke, The Reformation in England, pp.1-15.

Lent, 13 March 1529-30, preached for the first time before the Court. The result of the conference in May at which, among other matters, the question of the English Bible was considered, can hardly have been gratifying, however. A proclamation was issued, the general tenor of which was far from representing the views of Latimer and those for whom he spoke, although his name, with those of the other delegates, was appended.<sup>1</sup> A bill put forth in this connexion by Warham to be read by preachers to the people announced that the king, advised by his counsellors,

...thinkith in his conscience that the divulging of this Scripture at this tyme in Englysshe tonge to be committed to the people, considering such pestilente books & so evill opynyons as be now spred amonge them, shulde rather be to their further confusion & destruction then the edification of their soules.

The people were to be told that

...in consideration his highnes did there

1. See above, p.20 f.

openlye saye & protest, that he wolde cause the Newe Testament to be by lerned men faithfully & purely translated into Englishe tonge, to the extent he might have it in his handes redy to be gevyn to his people, as he might se their manners & behaviour mete, apte, and convenient to receyve the same, that ye will soo detest thes perniciouse boks, so abhore thes heresies & newe opynions, soo declayne from arrogancy of knowledge & understanding of Scripture after your fantasies, and shewe your self in the meane tyme without grudging or murmeryng...<sup>1</sup>

Latimer's noble and boldly written letter to Henry urging him to give effect to his promise forthwith, must have come at the end of the year as some relief to their disheartenment, and as an incentive to further hope.

Not long after this Bilney's friends heard with concern but not, perhaps, altogether unexpectedly, that on 3 March 1530-1 he had once again been apprehended as a heretic. This time he did not escape the extreme penalty, and met his death at the stake in the following August with courage and Christian charity. His fate must have brought

1. See J. Eadie, The English Bible, i, pp. 259-260.

home to his sympathizers at Cambridge how precarious at any moment their own position might become, if they were incautious in propagating the opinions to which they held so tenaciously. Bilney is a pathetic yet significant figure, as Powicke, with great insight, shows:

Now sad with servile dread, now uplifted with "the vain gladness of heart which he took for spiritual consolation", first recanting, then tormented by conscience, he seems to reflect the perplexity of his time, as the cross-currents of life swept over his serious and sensitive but puzzled soul.... He was not, like so many mediaeval heretics of his type, an exception in a world which was sure of itself; he was an exceptionally serious man in a world which was not sure of itself and yet did not much care, because it was conscious of the strength and energy and freedom in itself, a world in which cruelty and cynicism had free play, and indifference did not matter, yet a world in which self-assertiveness was almost indistinguishable from the craving after experience, whether of beauty or adventure or sheer evil. It was an exciting, though very dangerous, time for the men with ideas, and a good time for those who wanted to see what would happen.<sup>1</sup>

Something of this the young Thomas Becon must

1. op.cit., pp.19-20.



already have known or sensed from the events at Cambridge during his years of study, and the wider life upon which he was now to enter was to teach him much more. In 1530-31 he was admitted a bachelor of arts<sup>1</sup> according to the usual procedure.<sup>2</sup> Having secured the requisite testimonials as to age, character, and academic status, and passed the prescribed examination, he would obtain from his college authorities a supplicat to the Chancellor and Senate. This supplicat being allowed, he would have to submit as a 'questionist' to the formality of a brief oral examination, after which he would proceed determinare quaestionem, that is, to preside over disputations as an incepting bachelor. The 'questioning' always took place a few days before Ash Wednesday, so that Becon would enter upon his determinations or stans in quadragesima at the beginning of Lent, 22 February 1530-31. The ordeal, through which he came successfully,

1. Cooper Athenae, i, p.246; Venn Alumni, I,i, p. 114.

2. See Mullinger, op.cit., i, pp.352-355.

ended early in April 1531. There is nothing to suggest why he did not then proceed to his master's degree, nor do we know whether he left the University immediately, or whether he remained there for the rest of the year. He may have returned home, or have been occupied with making arrangements for the future; or he may immediately have entered the College of St. John the Evangelist, Rushworth, as a probationer, for in 1532 he is found living there, and in July of that year was admitted a member of the community.<sup>1</sup>

Four such impressionable years spent in Cambridge during the time that the University was the scene of the first serious clashes between protestants and their conservative opponents cannot have been without considerable and lasting influence, and it is therefore all the more regrettable that Becon tells us so little about them. Whatever may be conjectured as to his background and views

1. On the question of Becon's subsequent academic career, see Detached Note C.

when he entered the University, there can be no doubt at all, as his remarks in the Jewel of Joy testify, that his character and opinions were largely formed by the men with whom he came in contact and the events in which he, in common with his student contemporaries, must have taken a deep and often violently partizan interest. Probably disposed by upbringing to favour the reformers, he would lose no time in seeking out companions with congenial views. Among those who were up at the same time as Becon, and with whom he must have had some acquaintance, were Anthony Gilby of Christ's College and Richard Alvey of St. John's, both exiles at Frankfort during Mary's reign; John Cheke, also of St. John's, another exile, who before he was captured and apostasized had settled at Strasbourg; Thomas Bernard of King's College, later, like Becon, a chaplain to Cranmer; and William Turner of Pembroke, who was appointed physician and chaplain to the Duke of Somerset. Turner had as patron Thomas Lord Wentworth, who also interested himself in Becon later, and to Turner's Preservative or Triacle against the poison of Pel-

agius Becon appended a commendatory poem in Latin. Nor must we omit to mention a close friend of later years who will appear again in these pages, and who was possibly studying at Cambridge at this time — Robert Wisdom. Among the more senior men were Christopher Coleman, an Augustinian friar and one of the frequenters of the White Horse; John Bale, later Bishop of Ossory and afterwards an exile, who ended his days with Becon as a fellow canon at Canterbury; and John Ponet, in 1532 fellow of Queen's, who became Bishop of Winchester and on Mary's accession sought safety, like Becon, in Strasbourg. All these, with the exception of Bale, were known at this time to favour the protestant cause, and there were others, too, whom Becon probably met — Shaxton, Coverdale, Parker, and Taverner, for instance. But he mentions none of these names in connexion with Cambridge; two only, Latimer and Stafford, stand out in his memory, and we have seen how handsomely he acknowledges his indebtedness to them.

Whether under such influences Becon immediate-



ly became an active supporter of the reformation, or whether during this time the seed was being sown which was later to bear fruit, it is impossible to say. But we can hardly doubt that from the first all his sympathies and interests were set in a protestant direction, and there is every reason to believe that little more than five years after quitting the University, if not before, he had attracted attention as one of those favourably disposed to the protestant cause.

## CHAPTER 2

## FROM ORDINATION TO FIRST RECANTATION

1532-1541

## I

On the strength of a statement in the preface to the folio edition, dated 17 January 1564<sup>1</sup>:

I...have done mine endeavour these twenty-six years (so long have I travailed in the ministry) both by preaching and writing, besides my other exercises, according unto the grace given me of God in this behalf, to shew myself not altogether unprofitable in this my vocation and calling.<sup>2</sup>

it has been assumed without question that Thomas Becon was ordained in 1538 or thereabout. Further, it is generally said that he was almost immediately preferred to the vicarage of Brenzett in Kent.<sup>3</sup> For neither of these assertions, however, can the

1. i.e. apparently 1563-4; Becon had probably adopted the Continental style of reckoning the year from 1 January.

2. P i, p.27.

3. Tanner, p.85, followed in all subsequent biographical notices.

least shred of substantiating evidence be discovered. They are fully discussed in Detached Note D, and need not detain us here, for in the Norwich Episcopal Register there are four entries, hitherto unpublished, which finally settle the matter. They relate to ordinations by John Underwood, a suffragan of Norwich and titular Bishop of Chalcodon:

- |                 |   |
|-----------------|---|
| 25 May 1532     | Thomas Becon of Norwich diocese ordained exorcist and acolyte.  |
| 13 March 1532-3 | Thomas Becon, <u>secularis</u> , of Norwich diocese, ordained sub-deacon to the title of the College of St. John the Evangelist, Rushworth, in the Lady Chapel. |
| 29 March 1533   | Thomas Becon, <u>secularis</u> , ordained deacon — same title and place.  |
| 12 April 1533   | Thomas Becon, <u>secularis</u> , ordained priest — same title and place.  |

There is no doubt that these entries refer to the subject of this study, who, as suggested above, had possibly entered the College as a probationer soon after leaving Cambridge.

## II

Rushworth (the name was changed to Rushford during the seventeenth century) lies about four miles east of Thetford, and just off the main road which runs from that town through Diss to Lowestoft. Its importance in earlier days was due to the fact that there was to be found the only reliable ford across the Little Ouse between Thetford and Hopton, a distance, by the meandering river, of some twelve or thirteen miles.

There, in 1342, Edmund Gonville, Rector of Rushworth, founded the college of St. John the Evangelist. It was intended to be an experiment in a new kind of community life. The great monastic houses, absorbing lands and benefices in their encroachments, had so increased in wealth and power as to become in some measure independent of royal and episcopal authority alike. Inevitably there followed a lowering of standards and a decay of spiritual religion, not to mention the gradual exclusion of lay influence from the Church. The mendicant orders, which had brought about a temporary



revival and had gained the support of the people, were now in their turn falling victims to the laxity and secularity which are the attendant dangers of success. Gonville saw that something different was needed:

...not an abbey or priory or one of the monastic orders, claiming independence of bishop and archbishop and sovereign alike, and owning none but foreign rules, which no English power could control or alter...nor a body of men like the Preaching Friars, bound by no orders but of their own framing; but a college, or simple community, of priests living together in God's service, under the direct control of the Bishop of the diocese, holding their property on condition of strict obedience to statutes and regulations ordained by their founder, and subject at every point of their conduct to the Bishop's visitation and authority.<sup>1</sup>

With this ideal in mind, he fitted out an ancient moated manor house, with an old chapel attached, so as to accommodate a Master and four Fellows or confratres, and endowed the College with the Rectory of Rushworth. The foundation was

1. E.K.Bennet, The College of St. John the Evangelist of Rushworth, in Norfolk Archaeology, vol.x, pt.iii (1887), p.291. This article contains a complete account of the College.

at first purely religious, with no hint of any educational purpose. The Master had general oversight of the house, and pastoral charge of souls in the parish of Rushworth; the fellows had no such responsibility, but had in turn to see to the due performance of the services. Every day special prayers were offered by the College in chapter for the founder and all benefactors, and the Mattins of St. Mary, the Mattins and Hours of the day, and four Masses had to be said daily, as well as the public recitation in the chapel of the Placebo and the Dirige; no provision was made for Vespers, Compline, or other Offices. The founder's anniversary was to be observed 'solemnly' by the whole college.<sup>1</sup>

Towards the end of the fifteenth century the College benefited from an endowment by Lady Anne Wingfield for the erection and maintenance of a Grammar School for thirteen children of the Norwich diocese, of whom five were to be fed, cloth-

1. See a previous article by Dr. Bennet in Norfolk Archaeology, vol. x, pt. i, pp. 50-64.

ed, and brought up within the College walls, while the other eight received their education free. Two "honest priests", designated "Dame Anny's priests", were added to the establishment; they had to be born in the diocese, and were required to say daily masses and orisons with special suffrages for the foundress and other benefactors. Moreover, it was provided that one should

...alway be well studyd and lernyd in grammer abyll to teche grammer and usually techyng alle convenient tymes grammer in Russheworthe aforeseid to the said v childeryn and to other viij poore childeryn, noothing takyng for that hys labor or attendance bewaye of salarye or scole lier for or of any of the same xiiij childeryn.

The actual strength of the College establishment is not easy to ascertain. A letter from the Bishop written within a few months of the date of foundation refers to seven secular priests, possibly because two chaplains attached to a chantry founded by Gonville had been incorporated into the College. The five boarding scholars for which provision was made under Lady Anne Wingfield's endowment were to correspond to five fellows, and Dug-

dale specifies a Master or Warden and six secular priests<sup>1</sup> — by which he may mean either six fellows, or the four fellows of the original foundation, and the two "Dame Anny's priests".

At the end of the fifteenth century, during Bishop Goldwell's days, Rushworth was a prosperous college, and at the visitation by Bishop Nicke on 23 June 1514 its income was over 100 marks; there were 3,000 sheep, and the report states that divine service "laudabiliter observatur, et cetera bene".<sup>2</sup> The fellows, however, seem to have got into slovenly ways, and to have neglected the school, although neither at Rushworth nor at the other colleges in the diocese (for several founders had followed Gonville's example) is there any evidence of the corruption which was to be found in the older monastic houses. If they were not fulfilling their founders' intentions they were, on the whole, free from grave scandal. The visit-

1. Monasticon, vi, p.1385.

2. Jessop, Visitations of the Diocese of Norwich, p.91.



ations show evidence of this decline. On 23 June 1520 one fellow, Barnesdale, complained that instead of seven boys<sup>1</sup> there were only four, and another, Locke, a man of fifty who had been fifteen years in the College and had seen better days, confirmed this.<sup>2</sup> At the next visitation, on 20 July 1526, a more serious state of affairs was disclosed. Locke alleged that the scholars were neglected, and allowed to keep sheep,<sup>3</sup> the statutes were ignored and were not read publicly, scholars were not elected, and two fellowships were vacant. William Fisher, another fellow, stated that at the time of his admission there were only three fellows in the College, and three boys instead of seven. It was at this visitation that Barnesdale

1. In more than one visitation report seven boys are mentioned, though this number does not appear in the terms of the endowment. It is possible that the original number had been reduced, or that the reference is simply to the number of boarders, which had been increased from five.
2. Jessop, op.cit., p.156.
3. "...pueri in collegio non continue aluntur sumptibus collegii sed custodiunt pecora parentum non-nunquam..."



and Locke revealed that immediately after their examination John Purpet, the Master, "misit pro eis et sciscitatus est ac interrogavit eosdem quid deposuissent contra eum" : 1

These successive visitations reveal how foundations such as Rushworth, designed originally to foster the spiritual life, to promote learning, to advance education, and to set an ideal of the Christian life, had gradually lapsed into a condition of comparative uselessness. The College of St. John the Evangelist was probably representative of the greater number of the religious houses at this time, for the harbours of indolence, vice, and corruption depicted in the reports of Cromwell's agents a few years later were no doubt as rare as the houses in which a sanctified community life and a strict discipline were to be found. One of the chief reasons for the fall of the monasteries and similar institutions was their inability any longer to justify their continued existence, either to

1. ibid, pp. 244-245.

themselves or to the country. There was little sympathy at the beginning of the sixteenth century with the ideal which they represented, and generally speaking they lacked the will and the energy either to reform or to defend themselves. There were, of course, reasons why a foundation like Rushworth presented, even in its decadence, features more favourable than some of the great religious houses. It possessed no great endowments or extensive properties; it lacked the influence which might have encouraged it to interfere in high ecclesiastical politics; its Master and fellows were seculars, and subject to control and visitation by the diocesan; they were, too, we may almost certainly say, men of no great social consequence and unlikely to be connected with any of the powerful families; and, not least, the difference in ideals and traditions must have counted for something.

### III

Thomas Becon's object in joining this vener-

able community was to undertake the instruction of the boys. This would suggest that in the educational work a revival was beginning to take place at the College, and this is confirmed by the fact that at the next sexennial visitation, though the number of scholars is not given, no complaints were made that the establishment was not up to full strength.

Less than two months after Becon's ordination as exorcist and acolyte on 18 July 1532, the visitation took place. Although a formal affair, it was in no sense an inquisition. John Massy and Robert Baret, the inquisitores on behalf of the Bishop, came simply to hear complaints of grievances, insubordination, and maladministration; to investigate the discipline; to inspect the state of the buildings; and to audit the accounts. There was no cross-questioning, and no confessions were demanded. George Wyndham, the Master, was absent, but the four fellows, Thomas Barnesdale, Robert Locke, William Fisher, and John Croftes, were there, and with them were Thomas Horne, who was admitted fellow; Edward Hanson, another fellow who

had been admitted but not sworn, and now took the oath; and Thomas Becon, "artium baccalaurius, acolitus, praeceptor puerorum", who was also admitted.

On this occasion the young tutor probably found the proceedings somewhat uninteresting; the business was simply routine, and no startling revelations were made about the community in which he was to live. The only complaint came from Thomas Barnesdale, who said that the common seal of the College was not guarded as the statutes required,<sup>1</sup> and an injunction was made accordingly.<sup>2</sup> There seems to have been some uncertainty as to who were "my lady Annis prestes"; Barnesdale, on being asked, said that Robert Locke and William Fisher held that position, but it was ordered that their appointment be settled in a regular manner.<sup>3</sup> One or two further injunctions were made concerning minor

1. ibid, p.304.

2. ibid, p.306.

3. ibid, p.305.

matters, twelve pence was paid for Peter's Pence, and the visitors departed.

It appears from these transactions that although he was concerned with the teaching of the boys, Thomas Becon was not one of the two chaplains named in the Lady Anne's bequest; indeed, not being at that time in priest's orders, he was not qualified for the position. In the injunctions issued at the visitation the duties of the chaplains are specified as the saying of mass for the soul of their benefactress, and nothing is mentioned about the stipulation that one of them shall "alway be well studyd and lernyd in grammer abyll to teche grammer and usually techyng alle convenient tymes". It seems probable from this that it had been decided to relieve the tutorial chaplain of his scholastic duties and to restrict him, like his fellow, to altar services alone. His work had then been delegated to Becon as a qualified instructor appointed for the purpose of teaching the boys grammar.<sup>1</sup>

1. Becon seems to have been the only member of the community to possess a degree; none of the others is shown with any qualification.



Becon remained at Rushworth for at least a further nine months, for as we have seen he was successively ordained sub-deacon, deacon, and priest in the lady-chapel of the community's church to the title of the College of St. John the Evangelist; he would then be little more than twenty-one years of age. Thereafter all trace of him is lost for more than five years. The fact that his signature does not appear among those of the "Magister et confratres Collegii de Rushworth" who, "uno ore", signified their acknowledgement of the royal supremacy on 25 August 1534<sup>1</sup> may mean that by then he had relinquished his appointment; or it may simply mean that he was absent at the time. Had he been there, his assent would undoubtedly have been required, and as the submission seems to have been unanimous, it is probable that of those enumerated in the visitation record of 1532, both Edward Hanson and Becon had left the college. The Norwich

1. Norfolk Archaeology, vol.x, pt.iii, p.373; the signatories are, in order, Wyndham (the Master), Barnesdale, Locke, Croftes, Fisher, and Horne.

episcopal registers contain no record of the presentation of the latter to any benefice within the diocese,<sup>1</sup> and it is probable that he continued to pursue his vocation of teaching in the house of some gentleman.

#### IV

Thomas Becon's name next occurs in connexion with the appointment of a priest to serve the chantry of St. Thomas the Martyr in the church of St. Lawrence, Ipswich, founded in 1514 by Edmund Daundy, a merchant of the town. According to his will, dated 30 November of that year, the duties of the chantry priest, who was to be a secular, were to say Mass on behalf of the founder and his relatives (among whom were included Thomas Wolsey, then Dean of York, and his parents), and to be present in choir with the priests and clerks of St. Lawrence's on certain special days. For his main-

1. It should be noted that the registers are somewhat mutilated. Several of the pages for 1535 are torn and entries are missing, while the pages for August 1535 to March 1536 are missing entirely. It is always possible that a reference occurred to Becon which can no longer be traced.

tenance he was granted lands in the vicinity, and for his residence, a house adjoining the Crown Inn, in King Street.<sup>1</sup>

The first priest appointed by Daundy, James Crawford, seems to have attracted attention at the time of the rebellions of 1536 — probably by giving utterance to some incautious expression of sympathy with the insurgents or their cause.<sup>2</sup> He was indicted for treason, but appears to have escaped without penalty. Two years later, however, on 15 December 1538, Nicholas Hervy and Rauf Goodwyn (presumably bailiffs) informed Cromwell that Robert Daundy of Ipswich, merchant, had come before them and had commanded them to attach James Crawford again for treason.<sup>3</sup> At the same time Thomas, Lord Wentworth of Nettlestead, wrote to Cromwell: he had

1. For a full description of the foundation, with a transcript of Daundy's will, see J. Wodder-spoon, Memorials of Ipswich, pp. 348-353.
2. of the incident recorded by Dixon, HCE, i, p. 487.
3. L & P Henry VIII, XI, i, 1309 (p. 530) — an entry which has been incorrectly calendared, and relates to 1538.

...been desired by the bailiffs of Ipswich and the parishioners of St. Lawrence to inform his Lordship that James Crawford, late chantry priest of Edmond Daundy of Ipswich is an enemy to the Word of God, though it was reported that he was a true favourer thereof.

At the time of the last insurrection in the North parts (Wentworth continued) the then bailiffs reported his demeanour to me, which accords with the certificate they have made to your Lordship. They deprived him of the chantry because he did not keep the ordinances made by the said Edmond Daundy, and have at my request appointed Thomas Bekone, a discreet, honest priest, well learned, a true preacher of the Word of God, a great setter forth to the people of the King's most just and lawful title of supremacy, approved by God's word.<sup>1</sup>

Wentworth's letter is interesting in several respects. It indicates that since Becon was last heard of, at Rushworth, he had become known as a serviceable supporter of the reformation and advocate of its principles — "a true preacher of the Word of God".<sup>2</sup> Wentworth, no doubt, had suggested his appointment as a suitable means of counter-

1. L & P, Henry VIII, xiii, pt.ii, 1063 (p.453).
2. The phrase "Word of God" was commonly used by the protestants in England to designate their opinions.

acting Crawford's reactionary teaching, and Cromwell would interpret "discreet" and "honest" as a guarantee that Becon was circumspect yet reliable in furthering the protestant cause. He was, moreover, assiduous in preaching the royal supremacy, a further recommendation in the eyes of the Vicar General, who had then for more than three years been directing against the monastic houses the power of the Supreme Head.

There is nothing definite to account for the interest taken by Wentworth in Thomas Becon, though there are indications that the young priest was known to and befriended by certain people likely to be familiar to the Lord of Nettlestead. The Invective against Swearing, for instance, is dedicated to Richard Scott, whose mother was the only daughter of Reginald Pimpe of Nettlestead, and Wentworth's third son, Richard, married a Margaret Roydon who may well have been the sister or daughter of Thomas Roydon, to whom the New Year's Gift is inscribed, and who married Margaret



Whetnall, the aunt of Scott's wife Mary.<sup>1</sup> It seems probable that Becon had many well-wishers among these and other families which were united by ties both of marriage and of protestant conviction. It is not clear how he came to attract their notice, but we may surmise that it was through the tutorial duties which he had taken up in some gentleman's household, or through his services as a private chaplain to one of Wentworth's friends.

Concerning this appointment to the chantry of St. Thomas, however, there is some mystery. Wentworth's letter is perfectly clear; Crawford has been deprived (not, apparently, for his treasonable activities, but because in some way he had disregarded the provisions of Daundy's will) and Becon has taken his place. But there is no evidence that Becon ever entered upon his duties, and his name does not once appear in the records of the Corporation of Ipswich. Crawford, on the

1. For these family connexions see Genealogical Table 2.

the other hand, seems to have remained in the town,<sup>1</sup> and on 20 December 1540 actually witnessed a will as "chantry priest of St. Lawrence".<sup>2</sup> On the chantry certificate relating to St. Thomas's chantry eight years later, the priest is shown as Sir Thomas Pecoche,<sup>3</sup> whose name appears in several places in the town records — once with that of Crawford.

Only two explanations seem possible; either Becon eventually decided not to accept the preferment (perhaps from disinclination, perhaps on the promise of better things to come), or the move which had seemed advantageous to Wentworth later appeared inexpedient. Crawford's remaining in Ipswich suggests that he was not without supporters

1. He witnessed wills on 4 July 1539 and 13 December 1540 — Register of Deeds and Wills, fol. 42 and 27.
2. ibid, fol. 25.
3. Chantry Certificates, Suffolk, 1546 — return no. 45 at the Public Record Office, entry 34; see V. B. Redstone, Chapels, Chantries, and Gilds in Suffolk, in Suffolk Institute of Archaeology and Natural History, XII (1), 1904.

who resented the intrusion of Becon and saw in it a protestant encroachment to be resisted at all costs. The breakdown of the discussions with the Lutherans in the autumn of 1538 was ~~also~~ a setback to the plans and hopes of the advanced party, and by Christmas it may have become evident that caution was desirable. We do not know what Becon's opinions were at this time (though later developments suggest that they may have been distinctly Lutheran) but he may have been over-bold in giving expression to them, and Lambert's fate cannot have been reassuring to those who favoured protestant views, especially on the subject of the Lord's Supper. Despite the spoliation of the monasteries, signs were not wanting that the Supreme head valued his reputation for orthodoxy, which the statute of the Six Articles was shortly to vindicate. Whatever the explanation, however, Thomas Becon did not become Edmund Daundy's priest, and once again, this time for nearly three years, we lose all trace of his movements.

## V

Since Becon's ordination in 1532 events had moved rapidly in England. Queen Catherine had yielded to Queen Anne, and Queen Anne to Queen Jane Seymour. Successive Acts forbidding appeals to Rome and the payment of annates and first-fruits, and transferring to the Crown the appointment of bishops, had effectively extinguished papal jurisdiction. The royal supremacy had been acknowledge, though not without protest. Visitation of the religious houses had been followed by their systematic dissolution, until at the beginning of 1539 only a few of the great ones awaited the hand of the despoiler. Confessions of faith — the Ten Articles of 1536 and the Institution of a Christian Man of 1537 — and royal Injunctions defined the beliefs and practice of the national Church. With the downfall of More and Fisher and the eclipse of the party which stood for Catholic unity, two contending elements remained. The advanced, protestant party received some encouragement from the interpretation which they placed upon the trend of affairs during the ascendancy of

Cromwell, and found adherents, many of them self-interested in motive, among the new men whom the king was admitting to power and enriching with the spoils of the monasteries. Conferences with the Lutherans, however, proved barren of important results, schemes for a protestant league fell through, and with the fiasco of the Cleves marriage and the disgrace and fall of the Vicar General the initiative passed to the moderate or Henrician party, which was Catholic but not papalist. The king had never gone very far in the direction that those with Lutheran sympathies would have had him take, and all along had favoured the Henricians in matters of doctrine. Now he took action, and secured the passing of the "Act for abolishing of diversity of opinions in certain articles concerning Christian religion" — the statute of the Six Articles — which came into operation on 12 July 1539. The first persecution under the Act immediately ensued, carried out by the zeal of the orthodox laity of London, who secured so many heretics on one pretext or another that Henry was obliged to extend his clemency to them all. Signs



of the reaction, however, began to appear. Clergy who had married were compelled to put away their wives — not excepting the Archbishop of Canterbury himself; Latimer and Shaxton were forced to relinquish their sees; later, there were burnings for heresy, and one of those who perished was Dr. Robert Barnes, lately Prior of the Augustinian friars at Cambridge. At about the same time, to demonstrate how undeviatingly the middle way was being trodden by the Supreme Head, three papists were hanged, drawn, and quartered.

On 29 January 1540-1 a commission "for heresies and other offences" in the city and diocese of London was set up under Bonner, who had just been elevated to that see.<sup>1</sup> This was one of the many commissions appointed to proceed under the statute of the Six Articles, but persecution was again strongest in the City. After the oath had been administered by Bonner in the Guildhall, a search was made, but once more the zeal shown by

1. Foxe, v, p.440.

the commissioners defeated its end:

Such a number out of all parishes in London, and out of Calais and divers other quarters, were then apprehended, through the said inquisition, that all prisons in London were too little to hold them, insomuch that they were fain to lay them in the halls.<sup>1</sup>

On this occasion some two hundred were accused, but Audley the Lord Chancellor secured pardon for all but three, who were imprisoned. The rest were discharged, standing surety for one another, and bound to appear in the Star Chamber on the day after All Souls<sup>2</sup> to answer for themselves, should they be called. The day came and passed, however, without the taking of any action.<sup>3</sup>

In Foxe's catalogue of the 'heretics' involved in this affair, and their offences, there oc-

1. ibid., v, p.451.

2. So Foxe; Strype Eccl.Mem., I,i, p.566, has "the next day after", and Dixon HCE, ii, p.268, "the day after All Saints", i.e. on All Souls' day itself.

3. For an account of the proceedings, see Strype Eccl.Mem., I,i, pp.565-567; Foxe, v, pp.440-451.

curs the entry,

The same time also Robert Wisdom, parish priest of St. Margaret's in Lothbury, and Thomas Becon, were brought to Paul's Cross, to recant and to revoke their doctrine, and to burn their books.<sup>1</sup>

It has generally been stated, on the strength of this, that Becon and his friend were among those brought before the commission at this time,<sup>2</sup> but closer investigation reveals a considerable measure of uncertainty about the matter.

Let us consider first Wisdom's account of his own fortunes during 1541. The two hundred against whom proceedings were taken were discharged with very little delay, and the whole business was probably concluded before the end of March 1540-1. Wisdom, however, was not apprehended until the July following. After describing the attempts made previously to entrap him, he says:

1. v, p.448.

2. cf Strype Eccl. Mem., I,i, p.567; Dixon HCE ii, p.269; &c.

Doctor Roiston...and one Vicar Gale... which had been present at a Sermon that I preached on the Procession Wednesday, Anno 1541,<sup>1</sup> presented to the Bishop of London, that they had gathered against me iiij or four Articles. Now it was so, that the Sunday<sup>2</sup> before Magdalen day following, I came to London and resorted unto Paul's Cross to hear Dr. Wilson preach. But or ever the Sermon began, the Bishop of London's Sompner fetched me and carried me into the Palace, where I was kept till afternoon, and then brought before the Bishop and examined.<sup>3</sup>

It is clear from this that no action was taken against Wisdom until some four months after the events related by Foxe. The phrase "the same time" with which his entry begins suggests that the martyrologist, never the most accurate of historians, did not know exactly when Wisdom was dealt with, and simply assumed that he was among those presented in January and February.

According to his own account, Wisdom was persuaded to submit on the day following his examin-

1. i.e. Rogation Wednesday — in 1541, 25 May.

2. in 1541, 17 July.

3. Foxe, v, App.XXII\*.

ation,<sup>1</sup> principally because Bonner swore by God, his faith, and his baptism, that if he did so, he would be set free and the matter would never in the future be laid to his charge. He says nothing of any recantation or burning of books, and this was certainly not the occasion, as some have asserted,<sup>2</sup> when he was committed to the Lollards' Tower. His refutation of the thirteen articles then alleged against him<sup>3</sup> makes it plain that this imprisonment occurred immediately prior to his recantation in 1543; he says, for instance:

...they sowght out of the Bishop of Londons register old accusations layd to my charge two yeres agoe... Notwithstanding the Bishop of London then swore by his baptism I shuld never more here of yt<sup>4</sup> —

a clear reference to his examination before Bonner

1. Monday, 18 July 1541.
2. Strype Eccl. Mem., I,i, p.570, followed by Cooper Athenae, i, p.260, Garrett Exiles, p.340, and others.
3. See Strype Eccl. Mem., I,ii, pp.463-479 (Records, CXV).
4. ibid, p.470.



which has already been mentioned.<sup>1</sup>

Concerning Becon Foxe is equally inaccurate, and in making him recant with Wisdom appears to be thinking of their submission together at Paul's Cross two years later. We know that about this time Becon made his first recantation, but before June 1541 he had retired into Kent. At the very latest, therefore, his clash with the authorities must have occurred in April or early May — two months at least before Bonner took action against Wisdom. As to the rest of Foxe's statement — there is every likelihood that Becon was made to burn the heretical books in his possession, and it may have been a condition of Wisdom's release after submission that he too should do the same, though he does not mention this in his revocation of 1543.

Let us now turn to Becon's own evidence. In

1. Strype, due to this mistake in dates, says that Wisdom had been "in trouble before the Bishop of London" in 1538 (Eccl. Mem., I, i, p. 571), an error repeated by Cooper, Athenae, i, p. 260.

his second recantation, referring to his first, he says:

I...have in the countreyes of Norff. and Suff. three yeres paste wyllingly and trulye knowledged in opyn sermons, that I hadd before that day preached and taughte evyll and false doctryne unto them, whiche my Recantation as I made yt ys conteyned at leingith in this booke.<sup>1</sup>

This statement, made in July 1543, implies that Becon was first presented for heresy in the summer of 1540. But his chronology is rarely accurate, and the words "three yeres paste" probably mean that at some time during 1540 he was called to account and compelled to submit. This would be roughly consistent with Foxe's assertion that he made a recantation at the time of the persecution in February 1540-1. It is unsatisfactory to have to let the matter rest there, but in the face of such conflicting evidence any solution must be largely conjectural; I propose, however, to take Foxe's word so far as Becon is concerned, having

1. See the second recantation, printed in full in Foxe, v, App.XII

demonstrated that in regard to Wisdom he is not to be relied upon.

Becon, then, was apprehended on account of the sermons which he had been preaching in the diocese of Norwich, and was, as Foxe says, compelled to recant at Paul's Cross and to burn his books at about the time of the persecution of the two hundred in February or March 1540-1. There is no foundation, however, for Cooper's assertion that he was

...convened before the privy-council on a charge of advocating heretical opinions in his exposition of the ten commandments. He made an animated defence, and was sent to the Lollards' tower;<sup>1</sup>

this, again, is due to confusion between Becon and Wisdom. Becon was also required to publish his recantation in "opyn sermons" in the places where he had preached, which he did, so he says, "wyllyngly and truely". Some time before June 1541, however, he managed quietly to disappear, and sought an

1. Athenae, i, p.246.

asylum in Kent, directed there, probably, by those who sympathized with him and with the cause for which he had suffered.

Unfortunately no copy of Becon's first recantation is extant, but we know something of its contents from the references which he makes to it in his second. This appears to contain, not a reproduction of the recantation "at leingith" but a recapitulation of its main points, and runs as follows:

I shall declare unto you some specyalties .....of myne owne preachinge whiche a greate number of Norff. and Suff. knowe.... I have preached agaynste the praynge unto saints untruylie. I have preached againste the contynencie of prysts untruylie. I have preached againste prayer for the deade untruylie. I have preached so of the Sacrament of Thaltare as men were offended with me. I have preached also to the derogation and derysion of the Sacraments of confirmation and extreme unction. And all thys same have I doon under the name of Thomas Becon prieste. Whereof I am ryghte sory; and have heretofore under the same name of Thomas Becon made Recantation which ys here (as I have saide) in this booke worde for worde.

The original recantation may have been more explicit, but the admissions as they stand here give no precise indication of what was considered of-

fensive in Becon's opinions. The charges are only general, and are typical of those commonly preferred against the 'heretics'; they occur repeatedly in Foxe's accounts of the persecutions at this time. Only two contravene the Six Articles Act; to preach against the "contynencie of prysys" was contrary to the third article, and the first was worded so comprehensively as to include under its condemnation all who "by any means condemn, deprave, or despise the said blessed Sacrament",<sup>1</sup> and thereby cause offence, as Becon seems to have done. There is nothing by which we may distinguish him from the other humble offenders who were presented at about the same time; being a preacher and in orders, however, he was required to recant, and being found in the possession of heretical books, he was made to burn them as the statute required.

1. See Gee and Hardy, Documents, p.307.



## CHAPTER 3

RETIREMENT INTO KENT  
AND SECOND RECONTANTATION

1541-1543

## I

After making his recantation and repeating it in Norfolk and Suffolk for the benefit of his fellow-countrymen whom he had attempted to pervert, Thomas Becon made his way into Kent. He probably did so at the suggestion of friends, and may have carried introductions to some of the gentry with protestant sympathies to whom he later dedicated his first works. No doubt he hoped to find peace and even covert encouragement in the diocese of Thomas Cranmer — but he went cautiously, and took no risks.

...I chaunged my dwellinge, and leauinge that Country [Norfolk and Suffolk] repayred unto Kent where I have lurked ever syns. I chaunged myne Apparel and shewyd myne self lyke a layman. I chaunged also my name, and callid my self Theodore Basile. I chaunged the forme of teachinge the people frome preachinge unto wrytynge.

So he says in his second recantation, and his precautions are interesting. His retirement into Kent appears to have been something more than a prudent withdrawal into the country to escape further undesirable attentions. His methods of self-concealment are too deliberate and elaborate to be explained simply by a desire to avoid notice and interference. He had made his submission and had burnt his books; why was it necessary to adopt a disguise and a feigned name, and to "lurk" in parts where he was unknown, except to one or two ? And why, having publicly and extensively renounced his former errors, should he forthwith proceed to resume his heretical activities and teach the people by writing — for it seems to have been more than a mere urge for self-expression that impelled him to his literary labours ?

It is impossible to avoid the suspicion that in all this he was acting ~~as~~ according to a pre-arranged plan — that those who supported the protestant cause in East Anglia and had encouraged his preaching were now trying to secure his continued usefulness by arranging an asylum from

which he could issue the tracts which were to be his new form of teaching. For such a purpose Kent was admirable; he would be in Cranmer's diocese, within easy reach of the capital and his publisher, among reliable favourers of the new learning, and yet in parts where he would pass unnoticed and unrecognized. His change of name and apparel would facilitate the working of the scheme, and, although not uncommon,<sup>1</sup> are yet not easily explained on other grounds; Becon had undergone no rigorous persecution and, so far as we know, stood in no danger such as might warrant his taking these precautions. But of the existence of such a plan there is naturally no direct proof, though its probability is a not unreasonable inference from the evidence before us.

In June 1541 or thereabout we find Becon entertained by Sir Thomas Neville of Mereworth, whose hospitality and good-will were acknowledged

1. William Turner and John Bale, amongst others, adopted pseudonyms.

by the dedication of a work composed for the following Christmas — A Christmas Banquet<sup>1</sup> — in the preface to which he mentions sitting at the knight's table "before six months past".<sup>2</sup> A second work soon appeared — A Potation for Lent<sup>3</sup> — again inscribed to Sir Thomas, who had, it seems, rewarded Becon's first tribute with "singular beneficence and grand liberality", and had, moreover, diligently searched and compared it "with the holy scriptures and the ancient doctors".<sup>4</sup> Nor were these Becon's first works, for he had already written The News out of Heaven,<sup>5</sup> which he inscribed to another patron, George Pierpount, as a new year's present in recognition of his "most bounteous gentleness".<sup>6</sup>

1. Bib. I, A 3.

2. P i, p.61.

3. Bib. I, A 4.

4. P i, p.88.

5. Bib.I, A 2.

6. P i, p.44.

The News out of Heaven is simply a cento of biblical passages in which Gabriel, "the angel and ambassador of God", announces to men "the most sweet, most comfortable, most pleasant, most merry news" of their deliverance from sin through the incarnation, life and teaching, death, resurrection, and ascension of their Saviour Christ. Although Becon's first composition, it shows to advantage his method of allowing scripture to speak for itself by piling text upon text and illustration upon illustration, and relying for effect upon the selection and arrangement of his material.

The Christmas Banquet is the first of seven dialogues between Philemon (who usually represents Becon himself), Theophile, Eusebius, and Christopher. The last three, neighbours of Philemon, are invited to a spiritual repast during the course of which four dishes are served:

Cursed is the earth in thy work. It shall  
bring forth unto thee thorns and brambles.<sup>1</sup>

1. Gen.iii.17,18; Becon's own version is quoted.



I will set enmity between thee and an woman,  
between thy seed and her seed; and that self  
seed shall tread down thy head.<sup>1</sup>

Repent, and believe the gospel.<sup>2</sup>

We are the workmanship of God, created in  
Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath  
prepared that we should walk in them.<sup>3</sup>

With these as texts, the host takes it upon him-  
self to instruct and exhort his guests in Christ-  
ian doctrine and duty, while they from time to time  
interject questions, observations, and expressions  
of approval. At the end he sums up his discourse:

In your first dish I ministered unto you  
the knowledge of yourselves, and declared what  
ye are by Adam, that is to say, children of  
wrath, all carnal, and without the Spirit of  
God.... In your second dish ye received the  
knowledge of God's favour toward you freely  
through Jesus Christ. In your third dish, ye  
perceived by what means ye may obtain this  
favour of God, verily by true repentance and  
sincere faith. In your fourth dish I proved  
unto you, that of this your repentance and

1. Gen.iii.15.

2. Mark i,15.

3. Eph.ii.10.

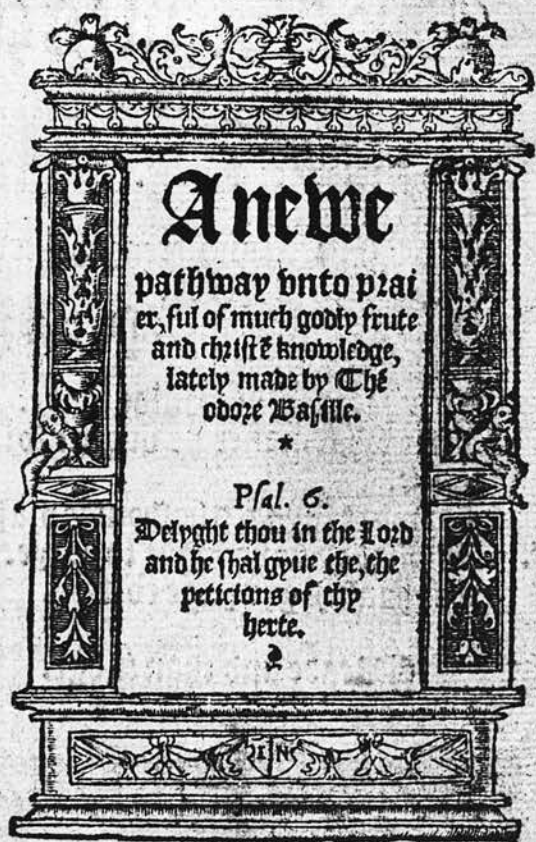
faith works must needs follow, yea, and those "works which God hath prepared that we should walk in them".<sup>1</sup>

Then, having fed their souls with this "celestial banquet of God's word", all retire to partake at Philemon's board of "such poor repast for the sustenance of [the] body, as it hath pleased God to prepare..."<sup>2</sup>

The Potation, written during February or March 1541-2, is an exposition of the sacrament of Penance under the three heads of contrition, confession, and satisfaction or amendment of life. It contains a section on fasting and an explanation of the ceremonies customary in the Church in Lent, and concludes with instruction on the preparation necessary before going to receive the Blessed Sacrament. Certain features of this work, ostensibly the most conservative of all Becon's writings and the one most extensively revised for the folio ed-

1. P i, p.83.

2. P i, p.84.



# A newe

pathway vnto prai  
er, ful of much godly frute  
and christe knowledge,  
lately made by The  
odoze Basille.

★

Psal. 6.

Delight thou in the Lord  
and he shal geue the, the  
petitions of thy  
herte.

2

(3)

Title-page of A New Pathway unto Prayer  
by 'Theodore Basille'.

First edition, 1542.

ition, will be discussed later.

Two more compositions followed shortly. The Pathway unto Prayer,<sup>1</sup> in fifty-three short chapters, treats of the nature and methods of prayer, a subject, says the author, which

...no man hath as yet perfectly entreated of  
.....neither in the Greek, Latin, nor English  
tongue, that ever I could see.<sup>2</sup>

The Pleasant New Nosegay,<sup>3</sup> written in May 1542,<sup>4</sup> is another work in dialogue form consisting of five 'flowers'; its contents are thus summarized by Philemon, who is, as usual, the chief interlocutor:

Your first flower is called "Unfeigned Humility". Hereof have ye learned the true knowledge of yourselves, and that ye ought not to be proud of any thing, but embracing humility and lowliness of mind, always confess that whatsoever ye have....it is the gift of God...and that therefore ye ought studiously to labour above all things that it be bestowed....unto the glory of God, the

1. Bib. I, A 5.

2. P 1, p.128.

3. Bib. I, A 6.

4. P 1, p.310.



profit of your neighbour, and the salvation of your own souls.

Your second flower is called "Pure Innocency". Of this ye have learned your duty toward God, and how ye ought to walk before him according to his word, and be perfect.

Of your third flower, which is "Faithful Obedience", ye have learned your duty toward our most puissant and excellent king....

Your fourth flower, called "Ready Assistance", taught you your duty toward your neighbour....

Your fifth and last flower, called "Christian Charity", declared to you, that without this true, christian, and pure love all your other flowers profit but little....<sup>1</sup>

It is interesting to note that the Nosegay is dedicated to George Whetnall, who, with his son Thomas, joined the exiles in Frankfort in December 1554, and at one stage took a minor part in the Prayer Book controversy.<sup>2</sup> Related by marriage to others to whom Becon dedicated these and other early works, Whetnall seems to have been one of the small group of protestant gentry among whom he had taken refuge.<sup>3</sup>

1. P i, pp.228-229.

2. Garrett, Exiles, p.324; Orig.Let., ii, p. Troubles, p. XXVI.

3. See Genealogical Table 2.

## II

Little in contemporary affairs finds any echo in these works composed amid the peace of Becon's Kentish retreat, but events were soon to provide him with a new theme. French feeling against Charles V had been exacerbated by an inexcusable crime; the imperial governor of Milan, in the summer of 1541, had captured and put to death two envoys passing through Italy from Francis on their way to the Turk. The political situation on the Continent worsened in consequence, and the usual manoeuvres by both sides to secure allies resulted in new international combinations. The Emperor obtained the support of Henry, and the French, abandoned by their former English confederates, made common cause with the Turk under the patronage of the Pope. By August 1542 the position had become tense, and it seemed as if Henry might be compelled to move, either to assist his new ally, or to safeguard himself. A despatch from the Privy Council to Sir Thomas Cheney, Lord Warden of the Cinque Ports, announced that the French had laid siege to Tournehem, and were likely to take it and

so advance into the 'Low Parts', endangering the king no less than Charles. Henry had written to the commander of Guynes asking how many men might relieve Tournehem if sent over in haste, and the Lord Warden was ordered to have fifteen hundred to two thousand men ready, with the necessary shipping. 'Letters' were enclosed, with a book of the names of those appointed to enlist soldiers in Kent, and they were to be sent to the Sheriff to deliver.<sup>1</sup>

Though the whole purpose was to be kept most secret, Marillac was able to inform Francis that there were indications that the English might move, and that "Mr.Chenay called milord Varden" had that day (10 August) departed to levy men in Kent to pass in haste to Guynes.<sup>2</sup> On 23 August he reported that musters of men were being raised in "Caint" by "the lord of Chesné",<sup>3</sup> and on 11 Sept-

1. L & P Henry VIII, xvii (1542), 593, p.340.

2. ibid, 601, p.344; see also 631, p.357.

3. ibid, 654, p.367.

ember, that the troops assembled in Kent might, with reserves total some fifteen or twenty thousand men.<sup>1</sup>

With all this martial activity going on around him, Becon was moved to consider what he could do to play his part in the emergency. After extolling the virtue of patriotism and the love of all Englishmen for their native land, and denouncing those of a "pestiferous and poisoned nature" like Reginald Pole who,

...being an Englishman born, danceth now like a traitor in a carnal's<sup>2</sup> weed at Rome, and as a shameless monster abasheth not to write, Roma est mihi patria,<sup>3</sup>

he praises the gentlemen and commons of the county which had afforded him sanctuary.

It will not easily be believed, after that the king's grace's letters were delivered now

1. ibid., 770, p.424.

2. This (for 'cardinal') was a favourite protestant witticism.

3. P i, p.233.

of late to certain gentlemen in this county of Kent, for the preparation of certain men apt for the wars, how expeditely his grace's pleasure was accomplished in every condition. The gentlemen (all other business laid aside) immediately provided their tofore appointed number of men, arraying them with decent martial armours..... Again, the men which were pressed to go unto the wars, it is almost incredible to see and perceive what alacrity and quickness of spirit was in them. They seemed to be so desirous to defend their country, that they in a manner neglected their domestical travails, their private businesses, not so much esteemed their dear wives and sweet children, no, nor yet their own lives, so that they might in any point do good to the public weal of England.<sup>1</sup>

But as for himself, he confesses that he is endued

...neither with wit, policy, valiance, strength, wisdom, riches, or any other thing wherewith I may do good to my country, as other men do;

nevertheless, recalling to mind the poor widow in the Gospel, and her two mites, he has been encouraged to compile

...a certain little treatise...not unworthy the reading chiefly at this time.

1. ibid, p.235.



In it he purposes to declare

...in how pitiful a case the christian public weal consisteth almost universally...

...what is the cause of these cruel wars that reign now almost throughout the whole world, and by what means they may be ceased...

...after what manner we may get the victory of our enemies...

...how the soldiers ought to behave themselves...[and also] they that tarry at home...

...how christian men shall return from the wars after they have gotten the victory, and on what manner they shall behave themselves, that their country may enjoy peace and tranquillity ever after.<sup>1</sup>

This "little treatise" is the Policy of War,<sup>2</sup> dedicated to the poet and soldier, Sir Thomas Wyatt, and later renamed The true defence of peace.<sup>3</sup> In it, Becon deplores

...the dissention among christian princes (which is a thing more dolorous than can be sufficiently lamented)...<sup>4</sup>

1. ibid, pp.235-236.

2. Bib. I, A 7.

3. Bib. I, A 7a, 7b, and 7c.

4. P i, p.239.

— especially when it leads to such an unholy alliance as that between Francis and the "great Turk", whose cruelties and infamies are related at some length. Nor, for all his patriotism, does he spare his own land, condemning not only sin, but also the reactionary spirit which scorns the benefits of reformation and hankers after a return to the old order which is passing away. He denounces the conduct of the average soldier — his pillaging, his gambling, his immorality, and his swearing — and the want of public spirit in those who remain at home, and particularly those who 'corner' the wheat market until they can force up the prices.<sup>1</sup> Becon pleads, too, for the appointment of chaplains:

It would help much unto true godliness for to have faithful preachers also among the soldiers in the time of wars, which might declare unto them the fear of God, exhort them unto virtue, move them unto the true confidence in God's help, encourage them manfully to fight, when time requireth, and show them how honest and godly a thing it is to

1. ibid, p.253.

jeopard their life for the wealth of their country.<sup>1</sup>

Throughout this work, which must have been composed between the issue of the "letters" from the king on 10 August and Wyatt's death on 3 October 1542, the theme of Becon's exhortation to his countrymen is that, while due preparation must not be neglected, the destiny of the nation is always in the hands of God, and only those who serve him faithfully can hope for victory and peace.

### III

Several other works belonging to this period may be mentioned here.

David's Harp,<sup>2</sup> a verse-by-verse exposition of Psalm 115,<sup>3</sup> needs no special comment; it appeared in 1542, but its exact date of composition is unknown.

1. ibid, p.252.

2. Bib. I, A 9. Ritson, who obviously had not seen it, says that it "is presumed to have been in metre" (Bib.Poet., p.128).

3. i.e. Ps.cxvi.10-19, Authorized Version.

In the preface to the folio edition Becon refers to a metrical Catechism,<sup>1</sup> nothing of which has survived except some prefatory verses, and a single line, quoted in the second recantation:

Gravyn ymages shall then non make.

In place of this Catechism he wrote, in 1559 or 1560, another "both long and large" in prose.<sup>2</sup> To it he prefixed the verses just mentioned, overlooking the inapplicability of the first line,

Though I be small in quantity,

to a work which occupies over 400 pages of the Parker Society edition ! Nothing is known of the metrical Catechism, though it appears among the books prohibited by the proclamation of 8 July 1546.

Coverdale had translated from the German a work by Henry Bullinger on marriage, Der Christlich Eestand, published at Zurich in 1540, and this,

1. P i, p.29; Bib. I, A 11.

2. Bib. I, A 53.

says Becon, was

...for the more ready sale, set forth in my name by the hungry printer with my preface, to make it the more plausible to the readers.<sup>1</sup>

It was entitled at first The Golden Book of Christian Matrimony,<sup>2</sup> and then, upon reissue, The Christian State of Matrimony.<sup>3</sup> In his second recantation Becon seems to assume responsibility for the whole book, and not simply for the preface:

...in all that booke I exhorte all men to marriage indifferentely.... And therefore I cutte that booke here in peeces.

When preparing the folio edition, he wrote a treatise of his own on the subject, retaining, with a new concluding paragraph, the preface which stands in the editions of Coverdale's translation.

Another work of which nothing is known, though

1. P 1, p.29. See also Bullinger's Decades (PS), v, p.xviii.

2. Bib. I, A 10. (edition of 1542).

3. Bib. I, A 10b. (edition of 1546).



it is listed in the proclamation of 8 July 1546 regarding prohibited books, is a collection of Christmas Carols<sup>1</sup> published under the name of Theodore Basille<sup>2</sup> and undoubtedly written in Kent.

In December 1542 Becon composed another dialogue, the New Year's Gift,<sup>3</sup> in which he declares

...what a precious treasure Christ is unto us, which was given us of God the Father for our new-year's gift, and how many benefits we have received by him.

He continues,

I have also described the whole life of a christian man, showing what we must do if we will enjoy so great benefits. Again, I have exhorted men to mortify their carnal affects and worldly lusts, and shewed them how they must walk both toward themselves, their neighbour, and God, if they will have the fruition of the celestial inheritance. To conclude, as I have shewed that all salvation cometh by Christ, so have I proved that Christ is no Saviour but to them that repent, believe,

1. Bib. I, A 12.

2. See Foxe, v, p.567, n.2.

3. Bib. I, A 13.

lead a virtuous life, and be plenteous in doing good works.<sup>1</sup>

An Invective against Swearing,<sup>2</sup> probably composed and published early in 1543, calls for no particular notice, and concludes the works known to have been written by Becon during his retirement in Kent.

#### IV

All the works so far mentioned were printed for the publisher, John Gough, by John Mayler, a member of the Grocers' Company, "a scholar, and a zealous man for the Reformation", who dwelt at the White Bear in Botolph Lane near Billingsgate. He had himself been presented at the time of the second persecution under the Six Articles in 1540-41 as "a sacramentary, and a railer against the mass";<sup>3</sup> he is reported to have called the Bless-

1. P i, pp.307-308.

2. Bib. I, A 14.

3. Foxe, v, p.445.

ed Sacrament "the baken god", and to have said that "the mass was called, beyond the sea, miss, for that all is amiss in it".<sup>1</sup> In all, eleven treatises or poems (some of the former of considerable length), and a long preface, as well as prayers and slighter compositions, issued from Becon's industrious pen in less than two years, and his popularity as a writer is evident from the fact that twenty editions of his own works and two of Coverdale's Matrimony, which he had in a manner sponsored, were put out during that time. The Christmas Banquet even appeared in a German translation.<sup>2</sup> No wonder Mayler found that Becon's name on the title-page made a book "the more plausible to the readers", and secured "a more ready sale".<sup>3</sup>

The summaries already given have sufficiently indicated the character of these works; they

1. Ames, Typ. Ant., iii, p.541 - a typical example of the poor humour in which some protestant wits delighted.

2. Bib. I, A 3b.

3. P i, p.29; see also above, pp.94-95.

are mainly hortatory or devotional, and emphasize strongly the practical aspects of Christian duty and belief. In no sense are they designedly controversial, though running through most of them there is a clear note of protestant apologetic. Their theological aspect will be discussed later,<sup>1</sup> but we may now take a glance at conditions in England as seen through the author's eyes.

Becon expresses great satisfaction at the progress of the Reformation and the state of religion in the country, due principally to the "dearly-beloved servant" of the Lord, "Henry, our most virtuous and godly king", who had

...subverted, toppled down, and overthrown a great part of antichrist's kingdom....<sup>2</sup> by his divine policy and godly enterprise...

Three chapters in the Pathway unto Prayer are devoted to an account of the "miserable captivity" in which the people had been

1. See below, § VII.

2. Preface to the Nosegay, P 1, p.193.

...detained and suppressed these many hundred years, through the usurped power and grievous tyranny of the bishop of Rome.<sup>1</sup>

Now, however,

...are these enormities, yea, and deformities, of this realm of England utterly exiled and banished. All false religion is extirpated and plucked up by the roots. The miserable captivity, wherewith we were oppressed in the pope's kingdom, is turned into delectable liberty. Our consciences are restored to their old freedom....Our most christian king is now, according to the verity of God's word, and his just and right title, recognized to be supreme head and governor of the church of England next unto Christ immediately here in earth.<sup>2</sup>

If it appears to the less enthusiastic reader of four centuries later that in fact one tyranny had only been exchanged for another, and that the writer had forgotten that he was in hiding because of a denial of the very liberty of conscience which he praises, it must not be forgotten that protestants habitually attributed measures of oppression or persecution to the malign influence of 'pap-

1. Ch.xlvi, P 1, p.180.

2. Ch.xlvii, P 1, p.181.



ists' and of clerical conservatives such as Gardiner and Bonner which, so they believed, would shortly be eclipsed in the triumph of the Reformation.<sup>1</sup> The king, they were sure, was on their side:

If his grace goeth forth as he hath begun,  
 he shall make such a flourishing realm both  
 in spiritual and corporal goods...as none  
 shall may be able to compare with this realm  
 of England throughout Christendom.... This  
 thing brought to pass by his grace's diligence  
 .....who shall not then justly think, that  
 the golden world is come again.... Verily we  
 shall then may well say, as the poet writeth,

Magnus ab integro seclorum nascitur ordo.  
 Jam rediit et virgo, redeunt Saturnia regna.

God mought assist his most excellent majesty  
 in all his godly and virtuous enterprises.  
 Amen.<sup>2</sup>

But it was not long before these sanguine hopes were dashed by the catholic reaction with which the reign of the Supreme Head closed.

Religious reformation, however, had brought no

1. See on this Dixon HCE, ii, p.404 and n.†.

2. Pathway unto Prayer, ch.xlviii; P i, p.182.

diminution of the sins and abuses which Becon so strenuously denounces; offences against God and man of every kind abound. After rehearsing, in the Policy of War, the various ways in which the Ten Commandments are continually transgressed, he cries,

O England, England, mine own native country... Would God, would God thou wast not partaker of those grievous enormities and wicked sins....! Would God thou didst not abuse the most precious benefits, wherewith thou art endued from above before all other nations ! Would God thou didst regard the pleasures that God hath done thee by restoring unto thee the light of his holy word, and by sending thee so noble and virtuous a prince to maintain the same !<sup>1</sup>

There are many signs of indifference abroad. Instead of gathering together on Sunday and holyday afternoons, as is the custom, to make merry, he would have the "common sort of people" occupied "in fervent prayers, or else in the reading or hearing of the holy scriptures".<sup>2</sup> As it is, however, they actually run to the taverns and ale-

1. P i, p.243.

2. Invective against Swearing, P i, p.362.

houses immediately the service is ended — if, indeed, they were not to be found there before it had begun.<sup>1</sup> Negligent clergy abound,<sup>2</sup> but even if the people have

...a ghostly and learned curate, which according to his office would be glad to teach them the will of God, him do they hate, they wish the pulpit a coal-pit. They think it a hundred year, if he preacheth but half an hour..<sup>3</sup>

A similar spirit is to be found among the gentry, with their "gallant pomp and lascivious pleasures",<sup>4</sup> and their craze for fine clothes.

The tailors now-a-days are compelled to excogitate, invent, and imagine diversities of fashions for apparel, that they may satisfy the foolish desire of certain light brains and wild oats, which are altogether given to newfangledness.... Sometime we follow the fashion of the Frenchmen. Another time we will have a trick of the Spaniards. Shortly after that beginneth to wax naught: we must therefore now have the Italian fashion. Within a

1. ibid.
2. Policy of War, P i, pp.254-255; cf preface to the Invective against Swearing, P i, pp.353-354.
3. Prologue to News out of Heaven, P i, p.39.
4. Policy of War, P i, p.253.

few days after we are weary of all the fashions that are used in christendom; we will therefore now, and God will, practise the manner of going among the Turks and Saracens....<sup>1</sup>

Among the devout protestants it appears that a more godly method of ornamentation was customary — this time, not of their persons but of their houses. Becon describes it in the Christmas Banquet:<sup>2</sup> "Here", exclaims Christopher, as he enters Philemon's hall, "here is nothing dumb, all things speak" — for scriptural texts are placed everywhere. Upon the parlour door appear the words,

I am the door. By me if any man entereth in,  
he shall be safe, and shall go in and out,  
and shall find pasture;

upon the chimney,

The fire of them shall not be quenched;

in the window,

I am the light of the world.....;

1. Nosegay, P i, p.204.

2. P i, pp.63-66.

upon the table,

Blessed is he that eateth bread in the kingdom of heaven.

Cups and dishes, chairs and stools, laver and virginals — all bear appropriate inscriptions. So impressed were Philemon's guests that they proceeded to adorn their dwellings in like manner,<sup>1</sup> and Becon had, no doubt, seen the houses of some of his friends similarly garnished.<sup>2</sup>

Just as there were those who disdained or opposed the Reformation, so there were others who found it advantageous to display a measure of sympathy with the protestants — and during the ascendancy of Cromwell, with the dissolution of

1. Potation, P i, pp.89-90.

2. A similar practice is related of Nicholas Ferrar, who hung the walls of the Concordance Room at Little Gidding with texts, aphorisms, and exhortations (A.L.Maycock, Nicholas Ferrar, p. 149). Readers of the life of W.D.Maclagan, Archbishop of York, will recall how he set over the washstand in his rooms at Cambridge the inscription: "Amplius lava me" (Life, F.D.How, p.28), and how (like Archbishop Benson [see his Life, A.C.Benson, i, p 577]) he placed texts, &c., over the different sections of his bookcases, p.300.



the monasteries in full flood, their show of enthusiasm proved not unprofitable. But the lives of these "gross gospellers", as Becon calls them, belied their professions.

There be yet (he says) another sort of people, which desire to be called gospellers and earnest favourers of God's word, promising many things for the glory thereof, and yet in their conversation are they no less wicked than the other<sup>1</sup> be.<sup>2</sup>

For them he has only one message:

Let them that will be counted gospellers, and serious maintainers of God's truth, provide that their living may answer to their love, and that they may be the very same in work and truth, that they profess in word and tongue.<sup>3</sup>

Nothing occasions more fervent expressions of thankfulness by Becon than the fact that

...the most sacred bible is freely permitted

1. These are the "despisers of God's word", and "sliders back from the truth of God's word".
2. Policy of War, P i, p.256; cf Potation (of Fasting), P i, p.104; David's Harp (ninth string), P i, p.293.
3. Policy of War, P i, p.257.

to be read of every man in the English tongue.<sup>1</sup>

This "incomparable benefit", given to the people of England by God through the instrumentality of "his well-beloved and faithful servant Henry the Eighth" was not, however, properly appreciated. The royal injunctions of 1538<sup>2</sup> had ordered "one book of the whole Bible of the largest volume, in English" to be set up "in some convenient place" within each parish church — but, asks Becon,

...how many read it ? Verily, a man may come into some churches, and see the bible so inclosed and wrapped about with dust, even as the pulpit in like manner is both with dust and cobwebs, that with his finger he may write upon the bible this epitaph: Ecce, nunc in pulvere dormio.....<sup>3</sup>

Christ's scholar, he says in the New Year's Gift,

...must love the word of God...study it day and night, talk of it with other, exhort his christian brothers unto the reading of it,

1. Pathway unto Prayer, ch.xlviii, P i. p.181.
2. See Gee and Hardy, Documents, p.275.
3. Prologue, News out of Heaven, P i, p.38.

rejoice when he see men have a pleasure in it, and encourage them so to continue, and to follow that which they read.<sup>1</sup>

But a marginal note at this point in the first edition, afterwards omitted, states that

...in Paul's church may a man see the leaves of the bible torn out, and that no small number; and all because men should have no knowledge of God's word: neither do men love the readers thereof, but seek with all guile to persecute them and cast them in prison; so that in a short time they die....

This implies a tyrannous curtailment of a hard-won Christian liberty, but it was really nothing of the sort; the marginal note is simply a typical protestant misrepresentation. The truth is that the privilege of the vernacular bible had been abused otherwise than by neglect alone. Not content with reading quietly, some took it upon themselves to read out loud, to gather an audience and expound — and this, even while divine service was in progress. Several of the presentations in 1540-1 under the Six Articles were for this offence, con-

1. P 1, p.322.

trary to the king's injunctions<sup>1</sup> and to Bonner's very reasonable admonition posted up over the Bibles.<sup>2</sup> It seems probable that Becon's marginal note

1. See Burnet, Reformation, Coll.I.III.xxiv (iv, p. 138): men were not to read the Bibles "with high and loud voices, in the time of the Celebration of the Holy Mass, and other Divine Services used in the Church", nor were they to "presume to take upon them any common Disputation, Argument, or Exposition of the Mysteries therein contained...."
2. "...It shall therefore be very expedyent that whosoever repayreth hyther to reade this boke or any suche lyke in any other place....he bring with hym discretion, honest intente, charytie, reverence, and quyet behavvour to and for the edyfication of his owne sowle, withoute the hindraunce let or disturbaunce of any other his Christian brother. Evermore forseeing that no numbre of people be specyally congregate therefore to make a multitude. And that noo exposition be made thereupon otherwyse then yt ys declared in the boke yt self. And that especyallye regarde be hadde that noo reading thereof be used a lowde and with noyse in the tyme of any dyvyne servyce or sermonde or that in the same be used any dysputacion contention or any other mysdemeanour...."

To this a second advertisement was afterwards added: "...where as also syns that tyme [the posting of the first advertisement] dyverse willfull and unlerned personnes inconsideratlye and indiscretelie....have reede the same especyallye and chieflie at the tyme of devyne servyce in this right honourable cathedrall church, yee in the tyme of the sermon and declaration

refers to John Porter, who at that time was committed to prison, where he died, for disobeying these orders — "cruelly martyred", says Foxe in his account, "for reading the Bible in Paul's."<sup>1</sup>

Described, as we have seen, by Wentworth as "a great setter forth to the people of the king's most just and lawful title of supremacy", Becon is fulsome at times in his adulation of Henry VIII, "a prince of most noble fame and immortal glory".<sup>2</sup>

of the worde of Godd, as well at Paules Crosse as also within the quere of this churche, in suche sorte as was bothe to the evyll and lewde example of the rest of the multitude, and also to the highe dishonour of the worde of God, Over and besyde the greate disturbance and unquyetness of the people repayring hyther for honest matiers and purposes: I doo entende..... In case the saide wilfull and unadvysed personnes will styll runne rashelye upon the brydell and upon noe gentle request or desyre will be enduced to refourme and amende them selfs and theyre lewde behaviour herein, but persever continually in theyr folye and obstynate mynde, to take downe the said Bibles agayne". Foxe, v, App.XIV - and for the first advertisement, Burnet, Reformation, Coll.I.III.xxv (iv, p.139).

1. v, pp.451-452.

2. Christmas Banquet, P i, p.82.



He is most sensible of the benefits enjoyed by those who live under the beneficent rule of the Supreme Head:

Certes as concerning myself, let God be but a little merciful unto me, if I had not rather chose to live under this our most christian king with that little nothing that I have, and to enjoy the benefit of God's word, than to live under Salomon, if he were now alive, and there to abound with all affluence and plenty of all worldly riches.<sup>1</sup>

Of other blessings than the encouragement of the Reformation, however (and that was shortly to cease), he refrains from speaking.

In the Nosegay, under the third 'flower' — Faithful Obedience — he expounds a high doctrine of the divinely appointed status of kings and magistrates.<sup>2</sup> Following a convention of the day in his exegesis of Psalm lxxxii.6: "I said, ye are gods, and all of you sons of the Most High", he asks,

1. Preface, Nosegay, P i, p.103.

2. P i, pp.211-222.

Doth not God here plainly say, that the magistrates are gods, that is, such as bear the offices of God.....?<sup>1</sup>

And a little later he says:

...their judging place is the throne of God. Their mouth and sentence is the organ and instrument of God's truth. They are the vicars of God. They are the livish image of God. They are the ministers of God for our wealth. They represent the person of God. They exercise the judgement of the Lord...<sup>2</sup>

Although Pauline<sup>3</sup> and Petrine<sup>4</sup> support is adduced for this view of the secular power, it is more

1. P i, p.212.

2. P i, p.215; cf David's Harp (fourth string), P i, p.277; Invective against Swearing, P i, p.370; New Catechism, P ii, pp.307 and 327. cf also Bradford, Meditation on the Passion, Works (PS), ii, p.254-255; Sandys, Sermon xii, Works (PS), p.225; Tyndale, The Obedience of a Christian Man, Works (PS), i, p.175; Whitgift, Works (PS), ii, pp.82-83. [The reference in the Psalm is either to "the wicked governors of the nations holding Israel in subjection" (Briggs, Psalms (ICC), ii, p.215), or, more probably, to deities subordinate to Yahweh — heathen gods, or guardian spirits assigned by him to the nations (Oesterley, Psalms, ii, pp.373-4)].

3. Rom. xiii.1-7.

4. 1 Pet.ii.13-14: Becon always renders ὡς ὑπερέχοντι, "as supreme head".

often to the Old Testament, with

...its picture of the polity of the chosen people of the Old Covenant, in which kings as nursing fathers of the Jewish Church had exercised authority over the priesthood as well as the laity of the Hebrew nation,<sup>1</sup>

that Becon, like the rest of the reformers, turned.

To show that the authority of the magistrates and common officers is the ordinance of God, whereof may I rather take a beginning than of the public weal of the Israelites ?<sup>2</sup>

So, in the Nosegay and elsewhere, he cites instances of the 'godly magistrate', such as Moses and Samuel, and of the 'godly prince', exemplified by David, Solomon, Hezekiah, Jehoshaphat, and Josiah.

The sixteenth century saw the application of the principles enunciated in 1324 by Marsilius of Padua in his Defensor Pacis, and Becon had observed in England the process whereby the royal suprem-

1. N.Sykes, The Crisis of the Reformation, p.16; see on the exaltation of the authority of the state, pp.14-16.

2. Nosegay (third flower), P 1, p.211.

acy had ousted the papal jurisdiction, and the spirituality had been subjugated to the civil authority. He will allow no position of privilege to ecclesiastics:

Theophile: Are the spiritual persons bound to be obedient also to the high powers by the word of God ?

Philemon: Yea verily, there is not one bishop or priest within this realm of England, which oweth not so much obedience to the king's grace's majesty, as the most inferior subject and vile temporal man doth. Neither doth this name spiritual, archbishop, patriarch, cardinal, bishop, archdeacon, suffragan, priest, deacon, &c., deliver them from subjection and obedience, no more than this word, tailor, shoemaker, draper, merchant, inn-keeper, water-tankard-bearer, dauber, cobbler, &c., doth.... Here is none excepted, no, not that Romish pork, which challengeth so great authority over all persons in the world.....<sup>1</sup>

Undoubtedly, he says, there has been in the past "great abuson in the clergy concerning temporal rulers," but he gives thanks that God

...hath in these our days brought it to pass by the revelation of his divine verity, that our most christian king, with certain other

1. ibid, P i, p.216.

princes, hath very triumphantly gotten again and recovered their authority given them of God....<sup>1</sup>

But this rightful supremacy of the prince was not recognized by all, even in a land so blessed as England. Becon mentions as exceptions the Anabaptists (against whom it was safe at that time for anyone to turn his hand or his pen)

...which think it a matter of absurdity and a thing very unfitting, that temporal rulers should reign over the spirituality,<sup>2</sup>

and various kinds of

...seditious persons without any godly fear toward the public magistrates.

1. ibid, P i, p.217.

2. ibid. By "spirituality" here Becon does not mean to imply that the Anabaptists had any theory of clerical privilege. Their ecclesiastical organization was very simple, and they certainly had no professional ministerial body or hierarchy which claimed, like that of the mediaeval Church, independence of the secular authority. He refers simply to the spiritual independence claimed by members of the sect. The Anabaptists seem usually to have denied that the state had any rights in the sphere of conscience, and that it was, in fact, a necessary evil. They rejected the idea of a state Church, and some even maintained that no Christian could hold civil office.



After citing instances from the Old Testament, he continues:

Neither have we wanted experiences of this thing now-a-days. For what, I pray you, hath ever been muttered or secretly conspired against the king's grace's majesty at any time, either among men of nobility, or yet of the baser sort, that hath not come to light, and wrought destruction to the authors thereof? This is undoubtedly the provision of God.... For as it is impossible to hinder or let the course of the sun or moon, so is it impossible for them to escape which imagine or work any violence or treason against his grace.<sup>1</sup>

Well indeed were men aware of that, with a Privy Council in constant session, and its agents active throughout the land in detecting and tracing to its source anything that could be brought within the wide definition of treason. So Philemon, with no less prudence than patriotism, explains to his friends their duty to the king and his magistrates.

## V

Where Becon dwelt during these two years in Kent we do not know, but he probably relied upon

1. ibid, P i. p.218.

the hospitality offered by various gentlemen of protestant sympathies. To some of them he dedicated the works written at this time. Sir Thomas Neville has already been mentioned, and also George Whetnall of Hextall Court, East Peckham, of whose "bounteous liberality shewed toward me at all times" Becon speaks with gratitude,<sup>1</sup> while Richard Scott of Scott's Hall, to whom he confesses himself "more indebted and bound, than my poor beggary shall ever may be able to recompense your most kind and free gentleness",<sup>2</sup> received the Invective against Swearing. Straightened, as usual, in circumstances, he describes his riches as "not worth a gally half-penny besides a few books and a little slender apparel".<sup>3</sup>

Whether or not he found immediate employment as a teacher, we find Becon in May 1542 back at his old work; the Nosegay, he says, was

1. Preface, Nosegay, P i, p.195.

2. Preface, Invective against Swearing, P i, p.355.

3. Preface, Policy of War, P i, p.235 and n.6.

...gathered of me in the space of few days, at such hours as I could conveniently suffurate and steal away from the institution and teaching of my scholars.<sup>1</sup>

He drew his pupils, no doubt, from the families of some of the gentry who had befriended him, and lived as a member of the household of one of his patrons — perhaps Whetnall or Scott. Not only did he change his apparel and assume lay attire, but he appears to have relinquished all exercise of his priestly duties. He makes no reference even to the fact that he is in orders, and in the preface-dedicatory to the Policy of War, possibly with the object of commending himself and his work to Wyatt, he poses as a man of letters by training and occupation:

Forasmuch as I have been trained up from my cradles in the court of Lady Mnemosyne and her daughters, and exercised in the wrestling-place of Apollo (although I may justly seem to have been there but a vain gazer and idle spectator), I thought it not undecent, according to my profession of letters, to bring forth some literal lucubration...<sup>2</sup>

1. Preface, P i, p.195.

2. P i, p.236.

Soon after completing the Nosegay Becon seems to have been afflicted with "grievous and troublous sicknesses", though of what kind he does not say.<sup>1</sup> His words also suggest that at the same time he had other difficulties with which to contend, and which caused him no little vexation. Writing, we may suppose in December 1542, the first pages of the New Year's Gift, he says:

...I, desiring nothing more than to be in quiet, that I might freely give my mind to the study of the holy scriptures, and sometime commune of them with my neighbours, have been so troubled and vexed with the cares and troubles of this world for the space of six or seven months, that I have had no leisure almost once to think of the holy scripture. O Lord, what is it to live in this wretched world? any other thing than daily more and more to be plucked away and estranged from thee, and to heap sin upon sin, and provoke thine anger more fervently against us? But now, seeing it hath pleased God partly to deliver me out of the troublous waves of this ocean, and to bring me into an haven of some quietness, I intend to repair unto mine old studies.....<sup>2</sup>

It is impossible to do more than guess at the nat-

1. Preface, New Year's Gift, P i, p.308.

2. P i, p.309.

ure of the "divers businesses" which had so "disquieted" him that he confesses to a certain "dissolution and slackness", but they may not have been unconnected with the events which brought to an end his sojourn in Kent.

## VI

1543 saw a decided reaction in favour of catholicism. The Convocation of that year took in hand the revision of the Institution of a Christian Man, and on 12 May approved its successor, the King's Book, or A Necessary Doctrine and Erudition for any Christian Man.<sup>1</sup> One of the reasons for the change of direction in religious policy is indicated in the preface:

...hypocrisy and superstition being excluded and put away, we find entered into some of our people's hearts an inclination to sinister understanding of scripture, presumption, arrogancy, carnal liberty, and contention.....<sup>2</sup>

1. Printed by Thomas Berthelet; colophon dated 29 May 1543.

2. Formularies, p.215.



Another is the desirability of regulating the use of the Bible. For those called to teach,

...the having, reading, and studying of holy scripture, both of the Old and New Testament, is not only convenient, but also necessary: but for the other part of the church, ordained to be taught, it ought to be deemed certainly, that the reading of the Old and New Testaments is not so necessary for all those folks, that of duty they ought and be bound to read it, but as the prince and the policy of the realm shall think convenient, so to be tolerated or taken away from it.<sup>1</sup>

It was not long left in doubt which of these alternatives was considered the more expedient. Parliament, sitting concurrently with Convocation, enacted a statute<sup>2</sup> for "the advancement of the true religion, and for the abolishment of the contrary" which, among other things, forbade the reading of the Bible to men and women of the lower orders, though noblemen and gentlemen might read it in their families, and merchants and ladies to themselves. Tyndale's translation, and other books,

1. ibid, p.218.

2. 34 & 35 Henry VIII. cap.1.

were prohibited, and the annotations had to be erased from all other Bibles and New Testaments.

A third persecution under the Six Articles set the seal upon this alteration in policy, and on Saturday 28 July three heretics — "poor innocents", the king afterwards called them<sup>1</sup> — Anthony Pearson, Henry Filmer, and Robert Testwood, were burned in front of Windsor Castle, while John Merbeck, fortunately for the music of the English Church, received a royal pardon.

Before the three Windsor martyrs had passed to the stake, a timely recantation — his second — saved Becon from their fate. With him at Paul's Cross on Relics Sunday, 8 July, his old friend Wisdom and one Robert Singleton also abjured.<sup>2</sup>

1. Foxe, v, p.496.

2. See Wriothsesley's Chronicle, i, pp.142-142. The date assigned to these recantations in L & P Henry VIII, xviii, I, 538, pp.313-314 — 14 May — is wrong. It has been assumed that Wisdom actually made his recantation on the day when recognizance was taken for him, but this would certainly not have been the case, see Foxe, v, App.XII. Wisdom himself is not more accurate, for in his revocation he gives the

Wisdom had attracted the attention of the authorities some two months before, and Bonner's Register contains a recognizance in the sum of £40 relating to him and dated 14 May, from which it appears that he was then

...prysoner in the custody and warde of....  
Richard Cloney at the commaundment of the  
Kings mooste honourable counsell....<sup>1</sup>

During the succeeding weeks he was examined upon his opinions; the admissions to which he had put his name two years before, and which Bonner swore by his baptism should never be held against him,<sup>2</sup> were brought out and, as Wisdom says, constituted "the very cheif matters that were now brought in against me";<sup>3</sup> thirteen articles extracted from his exposition of the Ten Commandments were also

date as "the xiiij day of July" — in that year a Saturday, and not Relic Sunday, as he says; see Foxe, v, App.XXII\*.

1. Foxe, v, App.XII.
2. See above, Ch.2, § V, p.72.
3. Foxe, v, App.XXII\*.

alleged against him; and he was committed to the Lollards' Tower. There he wrote the refutation which Strype prints — "Robert Wisdome....his vindication of himself, against certain articles charged upon him".<sup>1</sup> Eventually, however, the inevitable decision had to be made: the Council had

...long gone with this mischief, that now they have accomplished, bringing it to this point, that either I must recant, or else stand at their grace, which is as good to the preachers of God's truth, as is the grace of the bochers of Estcheape to the poor lambs brought into their market. I fearing this, chose to read what they would command me. Then was the matter committed to the bishop of Winchester.....<sup>2</sup>

What was happening to Becon at this time, and why he was called upon to recant, we do not know. But it is probable that having taken action against Wisdom, then curate to Dr.Crome at St.Mary the Virgin's, Aldermanbury, it was considered expedient also to deal with his friend. They had, no doubt,

1. Eccl.Mem., I.ii, pp.463-479 (Records CXV).

2. Foxe, v, App.XXII\*.

maintained contact with one another, and Wisdom, not many months before, had alluded to Becon in a sermon, as the latter acknowledges in his recantation:

And here I mighte says somewhat to maister Wysedom here presente howe moche was he de-  
ceaved or howe moche wente he aboute to de-  
ceave the good people, to call me opynly in  
his sermon made at Aldermarye in Lent last  
paste The man of godd, who have continuallye  
laboured in the service of the Dyvell, preach-  
ing untruylye by the name of Thomas Becon,  
and wrytyng untruylye by the name of Theodore  
basile. I mervaille maister Wysedom abhorred nott  
this Spyryte of pryde to make my wrytings  
equall with the sacred bible and goddis worde.<sup>1</sup>

Becon must have had to submit to an examination, but it does not appear whether he underwent any imprisonment.

On 8 July 1543, then, he recanted, in company with Wisdom and Singleton. Wisdom, standing "in

1. Foxe, v, App.XII. Wisdom also said: "And therefore where my companyon here Thomas Becon sayeth in his booke of Davys harpe, that persecut-  
ion ys a token of the true Gospell, that ys  
very false...." There is something slightly  
comic in the picture of the two friends reprov-  
ing each other which adds, in Becon's case, to  
the impression of insincerity which his recant-  
ation as a whole produces — though doubtless ~~each~~  
~~both~~ had been required to discredit the other  
in this way.



the myddys" of the other two penitents, began, reading "the shameful bill that Winchester devised". He confessed that he had denied man's free will and derogated the grace of God, and that he had preached against veneration of and prayer to the saints, and against the charity of the public ministers — that is, against the spirit animating the Privy Council in their repressive measures. He urged all those of his former way of thinking to abandon their present course:

...then shulde the ignorant people be soone quyeted, and pacyfied to yelde to the mooste perfecte christen doctryne nowe set forth by the kinges maiestye.<sup>1</sup>

He admitted knowing Frith, Lambert, Barnes, Garrett, and Jerome, all of whom, said he, had suffered most justly for their false doctrine. There had been no persecution but what was deserved:

This ys a Realm of justice and of noo persecution of them that be goode. I and my fel-  
owes here be nott onely not persecuted but we

1. i.e., the Necessary Doctrine and Erudition for any Christian Man.

bee mooste mercyfully handeled to be suffered  
to recant after oure so many foolde [manifold]  
offenses. Other have justelye suffered and  
wee fynde mooste mercyfull pardon and grace.

Then, turning to his old friend and reproving him  
for his teaching on persecution,<sup>1</sup> he continued:

...wee oughte not to call the punyshment of  
us and suche other persecution, but execution  
of ryght and justyce.

And so, with more words of abject submission put  
into his mouth by Gardiner, Wisdom concluded his  
ignominious performance, and handed out signed cop-  
ies of his statement.

Next came Becon's turn. Whether or not he had  
been told what to say, there is no doubt that the  
manner of saying is his own. His recantation was  
nearly four times the length of the one just end-  
ed, and in parts somewhat theatrical; the reader  
is left with the impression that, disgraceful though  
the occasion was, it was nevertheless an occasion,  
and that Becon, who was inclined to be self-import-

1. See p.125 n.1 above.

ant, did not intend to miss making the most of it. Even his self-accusations and self-condemnations have a ring of complacency about them.

He began in his best style:

Worshypfull Audyence, for declaration of my penitent harte and the testyfieng unto you of myne unfeyned conversion from error to truyeth, whereupon I have mercye and Remission of furder punyshment, due to myne offenses, I occupye this day the place of a penitent prayeng you to gyve credyt to that I shall nowe say of myself and myne owne mysdemeanor, and pray godd with me, that yt may worke discredite in you of suche thinges as I have taughte or wrytten contrarye to the truythe.

Then he proceeded to tell, as we have seen, how he had preached heresy in Norfolk and Suffolk, how he had recanted, and how he had disguised himself and had hidden in Kent. Next he confessed his pride:

I fynde yt worshipfull Audyence in the experyence of my self moost true, that as saincte Jamys saith Deus superbis resistit God resisteth the proude. I have been possessed with the spyryte of pryde and vayne glorie, and nourysshed therewith have indured theese labours, to wryte suche bookes as have goon fowthe under the name of Theodore Basile. First my newe counterfaite name, Theodore basile whiche ys as moche to say, as a kynge gyven of Godd, ys yt not a proude name to be of myne owne chosynge.....

Again,

...ye shall fynde in dyverse parties of my bookes greeke woordes made Englyshe as Encomion for a praise unmemosinon for a Remembraunce and suche other monstrouse woordes for the Reader to wonder at, and wrytten onely by me, for vayne glorie to doo the Reader understande that I were learned in the greeke tonge, wherein I confesse playnely I am not learned at all.

And as the crowning example of this spirit of pride he cited a paragraph from the prologue to the News out of Heaven:

I will not praise the book, lest I should seem to hunt after vain glory; neither will I dispraise it, lest I might seem rashly and without a cause to condemm that which is worthy praise and commendation of itself.... This I dare boast, that it containeth more true and christian learning than a great sort of volumes that we have highly esteemed in times past. He that shall make this book his companion shall here find in few leaves that the whole bible and commentaries of the ancient doctors do teach of Christ in many, so that it might well be called the treasure-house of christian knowledge. Neither can any man justly condemm or reject this book, except he also will condemm and set at nought the most sacred and holy bible....<sup>1</sup>

Having thus exhibited proof of his pride in

1. P i, p.43.

general terms, Becon went on to make certain specific retractions. First, he recapitulated the substance of his first recantation of 1540-1.<sup>1</sup> Then he took in turn copies of the Policy of War, the Christmas Banquet, the metrical Catechism, the News out of Heaven, David's Harp, the Invective against Swearing, the Potation, the Golden Book of Christian Matrimony, the Nosegay, the Pathway unto Prayer, and the New Year's Gift, citing from each a passage to which objection had been taken, and then cutting the offending book in pieces. Finally, he renounced his doctrine in general:

And besyde theese specialties whiche I cannot with any excuse avoyde, the good woordes in my bookes, suche as well placed and ordered mighte be spoken, bee of my singularitie and vanytie soo set forthe as they mighte gyve occasion (yf credyte were hadde to the Autor) to maintayne many suche naughtie and pestyferous opynyons as hathe been of late sooded amongs the people. And therefore I wyshe here all my bookes destroyed accordynge to the kynges maiestyes proclamations<sup>2</sup> as theese be here destroyed with myne owne handes. And to thentent noo man shulde mysraporte what I have saied I have signed dyverse cop-

1. See above, p.74.

2. See the Six Articles Act, Gee and Hardy, Documents, p.317.



yes of that I nowe reherse with myne owne hands. Whereof eche man may have the copye that will.<sup>1</sup>

The proceedings terminated with a brief abjuration by Singleton, who said:

...my Companyons here presente have spoken unto you many woordes for declaration of them self. I shall conclude in a fewe whiche be theese. I am an unlearned fantastycall foole. Suche hathe been my preachinge and suche hathe been my wrytinge, which I heare before you all teare in peaces.

Neither this nor the previous recantation seems to have troubled Becon unduly, but Wisdom's submission appears to have weighed upon his mind to such an extent that he composed

...a revocation of that shameful bill that Winchester devised and Wisdome read at Paul's Cross in London, on the Relic Sunday the xiiij day of July,<sup>2</sup> Anno Dom<sup>i</sup>. 1543; wherein the said Wisdome meekly confesseth his

1. The recantation in full will be found in Foxe, v, App.XII.
2. The error in this date has already been noted, see above, p.122 and n.2.

frailty and fearful weakness, whereby he for fear of death fell to this impiety, and sheweth himself earnestly repentant and sorry of that great slander and occasion of evil that he then committed against the congregation of God, and also desireth all faithful Christians to forgive him that offence, and to receive him again reconciled to the true Church of Christ.

Later on he writes:

...the Lord knoweth how to make a man strong after this weakness, and to raise him again after his fall. Wherefore I wholly putting myself unto the mercy of God promised in his only-beloved Jesu Christ, do with all my heart repent that my slaunders, and as here followeth revoke it.<sup>1</sup>

It is apparently to this revocation that Becon alludes when he mentions among Wisdom's works

...a confutation of those errors which were imputed and laid to his charge very unjustly of his adversaries, a book farced with all kind of godly learning.<sup>2</sup>

1. Foxe, v, App.XXII\*; the whole document may be found in a collection of Letters of the Martyrs in the possession of Emanuel College, Cambridge, vol.ii, foll.88-130.

2. Jewel of Joy, P ii p.423.

## VII

Becon's "specialties" are, on the whole, comparatively mild in character; they are eighteen in number, collected out of nine different works, and are presumably passages to which exception had been taken by the authorities, and upon which he may have been examined. There seems to be no reason why they were selected to the exclusion of others, often more obnoxious. I propose to set them out as they appear in the recantation, with Becon's comments.

The following passages were probably regarded as objectionable because they implied criticism of the measures taken to enforce doctrinal uniformity, and encouraged the protestants to persevere in their opposition.

...as they persecuted the prophetes and true preachers of goddis woorde<sup>1</sup>, evyn soo doo they nowe:<sup>2</sup> in which I seme tapprove the cause of

1. Folio ed., "verity".

2. Policy of War, P i, p.242.

suche as have been justelye punyshed by the ordre of the kinges maiestye lawes. Which be onely suche as have preached or taughte false doctryne....

...I bydde men marke that Thapostles saiede wee cannot doo none otherwyse but speake...<sup>1</sup>

...as good woorks folowe fayeth so dothe persecution folowe the confession of goddis woorde.<sup>2</sup>

...speakinge of the confession of oure faythe I say mooste sedytiouslie theese woordes followinge, noo menacyng woordes noo imprisonmente noo cheynes noo fetters no swerd no faggot no fyer oughte to plucke us from this confession no tyrannie oughte soo to be feared that godd and his truyth shulde not be confessed:<sup>3</sup> as though theese punyshments were used againste the true confession of faythe.

Everything depends upon the way such words are interpreted. It could be claimed that they were innocuous, and superficially at least they seem so, but the Privy Council would undoubtedly regard them as tendentious (which they were probably meant to

1. David's Harp (second string), P i, p.271. The allusion is to the occasion when Peter and John appeared before the Sanhedrin — esp. Acts.iv. 20.
2. David's Harp (third string), P i, p.273.
3. Potation (of Confession), P i, p.99.

be) and not at all calculated to promote that quietness and unanimity in religious matters which was the desire of the Supreme Head.

To certain passages exception would be taken on account of their teaching on grace, faith, and good works. True to the Lutheran principles which he had imbibed, Becon makes faith the "foundation and ground of the christian religion",<sup>1</sup> and asserts that "Faith in Christ alone saveth".<sup>2</sup> This view of faith leads him, as it led many of the Lutherans, to insist that good works necessarily and inevitably spring from it, so that it becomes the principle, not simply of justification, but of the whole Christian life.

In my booke of a Chrystmasse bankett I  
say the gyftes of grace cannot be ydle.<sup>3</sup>

1. Nosegay (second flower), P i, p.207.
2. Banquet (third dish), marg. note. P i, p.79;  
cf also Pathway unto Prayer, xvi, P i, p.147,  
and David's Harp (first string), P i, pp.269-270.
3. P i, p.80: "...the gifts of virtues cannot be idle" (folio) — a quotation from a work attributed to Ambrose, see n.2.



Whiche ys contrarye to Sainte Paule, desyr-  
ynge the Corynthyans that they will not re-  
ceave the grace of godd in vayne. And in the  
same booke I say also that yt ys impossible  
for true faythe to be without goode woorkes,<sup>1</sup>  
a faythfull man, whiche is the sonne of Godd.<sup>2</sup>  
Thys ys daungerouslye and falselye spoken to  
mantayne the abhominable opynyon of necessitie,  
whiche is neyther in vice ne vertue.

...a Christen man setting before his eyes the  
unmeasurable goodnes of godd and gyvyng earnest-  
este faythe thereto cannot otherwyse but love  
god agayne and take all meanes possible to  
please hym, to woork hys wyll, and to doo  
that whiche he requyreth of hym.<sup>3</sup>

Reference has already been made to the statement:

...as good woorks folowe fayeth so dothe per-  
secution folowe the confession of goddis woorde.

after which Becon continues:

...Chrystes woorde and the crosse be compan-

1. This may not be a quotation; I have failed to trace the words, but the idea frequently occurs in the Banquet, of the following: "...good works necessarily follow the christian faith...as the shadow followeth the body, and death the life", (fourth dish, P i, p.81).
2. This again cannot be traced, but Becon says in the Banquet, "By faith are we made the sons of God" (third dish, P i, p.79).
3. David's Harp (second string), P i, p.271.

yons inseparable, and as the shadowe folowith the bodye soo dothe the crosse folowe the woorde of chryste and as fyre and heate cannot be separated, soo cannot the woorde of chryste and the crosse be plucked asonder. In whiche woordes I doo not onely noughtelie affirm the necessytie of goode workynge of suche as be in faythe, but also falselye and sedytiously saye that evyn amongst goode chrysten men the doctryne whiche ys not continually persecuted with the crosse (as I call yt) cannot be the true doctryne of chryste.<sup>1</sup>

Here the idea recurs that persecution is the test of true religion, but it is really subsidiary to the conception that good works necessarily follow faith, a claim which is also made in another passage, this time from the Nosegay:

...as he that hathe the true and perfecte sighte of the eyes stumbleth nott but walketh at all tymes without daunger soo in lyke manner he that ys endued by christs spyrytt with the lighte of holye scryptures wandereth not from chryste, and that the gaates of hell cannot prevaile againste hym, And that Satan with all his Armye are not able once to abduce and remove hym from the true wayes for the lighte of godds woorde ys continually before his eyes.<sup>2</sup> In whiche woordes I torne the promisse made by oure Savyoure Chryste to

1. ibid (third string), P i, p.273.

2. Preface, P i, p.192.

his church unto every faythfull man as though he whiche were ones faithful coulde noo more be over come with the devill and comytte deadly synne: falselye.

On this matter the Necessary Doctrine and Erudition declares otherwise:

...it is no doubt, but although we be once justified, yet we may fall therefrom by our own freewill and consenting unto sin, and following the desires thereof...although we be illuminate, and have tasted the heavenly gift, and be made partakers of the Holy Ghost, yet may we fall, and displease God. ....And here all phantastical imagination, curious reasoning, and vain trust of predestination, is to be laid apart....<sup>1</sup>

No less contradictory to the teaching of the new formulary was the sense in which Becon had written against images:

In my booke of a newe Cathecisme I saye that godd commaundeth we shall make noo gravyn ymage. Theese be my woordes, Gravyn ymages shall then non make. Which my woordes soo spoken against ymages as though all ymages were unlawfull I myself doo condemne.

The King's Book, on the other hand, stated express-

1. Formularies, p.367.

ly that

...we be not forbidden to make or to have similitudes or images, but only we be forbidden to make or to have them to the intent to do godly honour unto them..... although images of Christ and his saints be the works of men's hands only, yet they be not so prohibited but that they may be had and set up both in churches and in other places, to the intent that we...may call to remembrance the manifold examples of virtues which were in the saints whom they do represent.<sup>1</sup>

It is interesting to observe that in the conservative Potation Becon writes of the veiling of the images in Lent, and says nothing directly in condemnation of them.<sup>2</sup>

Two passages denounce the following of men's traditions rather than the scriptures:

I forbydde...the teachinge of all mennys tradycions (as I call them), and will men having spirituall chardge to teache onelye the scryptures and suche thinges, whereof the holy gooste ys the Authoure, contempnyng arrogantelye all other teachings....<sup>3</sup>

1. ibid, p.299.

2. P i, p.111.

3. Invective against Swearing, P i, p.382.

In my booke callid the potation I say theese woordes They that teache any other thinges than the scriyptures teache not chrysten but humayne inventions.<sup>1</sup>

Two others, contrary to the Six Articles<sup>2</sup> and the Necessary Doctrine and Erudition,<sup>3</sup> "exhorte all men to marrage indifferentelye; makynge noo difference whether they bee pryests or noo":

Let other prayse suche as maye justelye seame to be monstrouse of nature for their steryllitie and barrennes; yet will I com-mende them, whiche accordinge to their fyrst creation and the naturall dysposition, that godd from the begynnyng engraffed in them are fructefull as a plentuous vyne.<sup>4</sup>

Let other prayse them whiche when they dye leave noo lyvyng and quycke testymonies behynde them; yet will I commende them which when they gyve over to nature leave quyck and lyvyng testymonies behynde them wherebye they declare that they have lyved and not been [un]fructefull nor unprofitable to the

1. ibid, p.87.

2. See Gee and Hardy, Documents, LXV, esp. pp.306, 310, and 318-319.

3. Formularies, p.293.

4. Christen state of Matrimony, preface, fol.A ii verso-A iii retro (Book of Matrimony, F i, fol. cccclxii retro).



christen publique weale.<sup>1</sup>

Yet two more passages simply reflect that presumptuous "Spyryte of pryde" of which he had already made acknowledgement at length:

My faithe ys that I am wrytten in the booke of lyef.<sup>2</sup>

And in the same booke with lyke presumption as thoughe I were he of whom wolde ask accompte of all that perysshed in theire Tyme I say theese woordes folowyng, yf any man will not amende after this oure admonition his dampnation fall upon his owne headd for I am free from his bloudde and have doon my duytie in that behalf.<sup>3</sup>

In the News out of Heaven, after quoting certain propheticall denunciations of formal sacrifices unaccompanied by any change of heart, Becon says:

Here you see that God hath no pleasure in these external sacrifices, but rather abhorreth them.<sup>4</sup>

1. ibid, fol.A iii verso (Book of Matrimony, F i, fol.cccclxi verso).

2. Invective against Swearing, P i, p.356.

3. ibid, P i, p.357.

4. P i, p.49.

In the recantation his words appear with a slight but significant alteration:

...godd hathe no pleasure in externall sacryfices but aborreth them...

Thus he is made to condemn all outward or ritual sacrifices, and to imply that only inward and spiritual ones are acceptable to God. Restored to its context, however, his statement clearly refers only to the worthless offerings of which Isaiah, Amos, and Malachi complain, and it would seem here that a retraction has been unjustly extorted. But reading further, we notice that Becon expresses no approval of those sacrifices which are the genuine expression of a truly penitent spirit. His offence is certainly one only of omission, and by no means grave at that; the authorities, however, were quick to see that the omission could be made to serve their purpose. It presented a suitable opportunity to extort a statement upon the Mass, concerning which no heterodox opinions seem to have been detected in Becon's writings — though he had caused offence, as we have seen, by his manner of preaching about it. So he declares, as he had no doubt

been directed,

...albeit godd ahhorreth ypocrysie, and ys not pleased with owtewarde Sacrifices where inwarde devotion wantieth, yet was godd highlye pleased with Abelles Sacryfice and ys nowe undoubtedlye moste hyghlye pleased with owre owtewarde celebration of the mooste high, pure, and excellent Sacryfice of the mooste bleassed Sacrament of Thaltare, wherein chryste hymself offereth hymself by the mynyster for a continuall memorye Reall and effectual of his oblation made at his laste supper and uppon the Crosse.

Of the "specialties" so far reviewed it is clear that some are definitely heretical, either specifically or in tendency, and represent in certain cases views of an advanced protestant character derived chiefly from the teaching of Luther. But other items in the recantation seem to have been selected with the object of discrediting Becon publicly — presumably in the hope of weakening the influence which he wielded through writings which passed so rapidly into second and even third editions. Only so can we satisfactorily account for the disproportionate emphasis throughout the recantation upon such comparative trivialities as his vainglory and pride. The defects of character al-

ready noticed made it the more likely that at Paul's Cross he would exhibit himself in the desired colours. And even where no real retraction was involved, a declaration such as that last considered, affirming a catholic view of the Mass, would be damaging to the protestant cause when made by so popular a writer as Becon.

There remain, however, two passages which are remarkable because they do not appear to deviate essentially from the standards of orthodoxy approved by the Supreme Head and the Church in the third English Confession. In the Potation, Becon says,

...I call satisfaction amēdment of lyef  
whiche I never redde in scrypture nor auntyent  
doctours to be the exposition of satisfaction.<sup>1</sup>

Yet in the Necessary Doctrine and Erudition he had undoubtedly read, and presumably so had his accusers, that for the obtaining of the sacrament of penance "contrition, confession, and satisfaction" are required,<sup>2</sup> and further, that this satisfaction

1. P i, p.102.

2. Formularies, p.257.

...is not so to be taken as though the penitent sinner could worthily merit or deserve remission of sins by any pain or punishment to be by him suffered, or to make to God any just or full recompense equivalent to the sin that he hath committed against him, and so to satisfy, which he can never do; for that satisfaction hath only our Saviour Christ wrought in his glorious passion: but to satisfy (as here is meant by satisfaction) is to please God with an humble, lowly heart, ready to bring forth the fruits of penance, and to bring them forth in deed, as in alms, prayer, and fasting, with all such means as may serve for the cutting away of the occasion of sin, as the minister shall think good...with a full purpose to lead a new life, and therewith to forgive all men their trespasses, to restore to all men that he hath unjustly taken or retained from them, to recompense all hurts and injuries done by him.... Christ therefore hath satisfied for all; by virtue whereof our satisfaction is accepted and allowed of God.....<sup>1</sup>

What is this but to say that in large measure satisfaction is, on our part, amendment of life? And Becon makes his meaning clear in words which bear a distinct resemblance to those of the formulary. Stating in the first place that

...Christ alone is the omnisufficient satisfaction for all our sins unto God the Father... there is no satisfaction perfect and sufficient....but only the death of Christ...,

1. ibid, p.260.



he goes on to insist that for the satisfaction effected by Christ to avail for the penitent, there must be a response on the part of the latter:

Whosoever repenteth him of his sins from the very heart, and is sorry for them, lamenteth his misery, hungereth for strength to do the will of God, knowledgeth his offences, laboureth with all main to walk in a new life....needeth not to doubt but that Christ by his death hath abundantly satisfied to God the Father for his sins.<sup>1</sup>

But satisfaction means more than this:

...ye must then amend your life.... Ye must practise in your living all godliness and innocency. Fasting, prayer, and alms, must diligently be exercised of you.... These things done, then remaineth there a true and perfect satisfaction to our neighbour, whom we have offended or hurt either in word or deed.<sup>2</sup>

When it is remembered that a few pages before this Becon had written (though admittedly somewhat guardedly) in favour of auricular confession, it is difficult to understand how exception could

1. Potation (of Satisfaction on Amendment of Life)  
P i, p.102.

2. ibid, P i, p.103.

justly have been taken to a view of satisfaction which conformed so closely to the teaching of the King's Book.

The second passage is also from the Potation:

...Repetinge the thirde dysshe of my bankett [in the Potation<sup>1</sup>] I make two meanes onely tobtayne kyndnes at goddys hande repentaunce and beleaff [i.e., faith], leaving owte the will to be confessid and to make satisfaction.

It is true that in the Banquet Becon says nothing of confession and satisfaction, but in the Potation there are separate sections on each, to which, in spite of his expository style and method, objection could hardly have been taken on the ground of their heterodoxy. Here also, it seems unfair that a retraction should have been demanded.

This second recantation as a whole, however, leaves us in no doubt as to the extent to which Becon's opinions were coloured by Lutheran teaching, and were calculated, therefore, to excite the suspicions of the authorities as they became

1. P i, p.90.

more reactionary in their attitude towards protestantism. Moreover, an examination of his 'first period' works, as we may call them, reveals features which do not figure prominently in Becon's recantation, but which show clearly the direction in which his sympathies lay, and would contribute to the unfavourable impression created by his activities and known disposition.

There is, for instance, a strong emphasis upon man's desperately sinful plight and utter incapacity for pleasing God, and upon the corresponding omnisufficiency of Christ as Saviour. We are "utterly fallen from the favour of God", and "altogether without the Spirit of God".<sup>1</sup> Becon describes our unregenerate state and its reversal as follows:

...not we only, but also all that ever we do of ourselves, is unpure and unclean in the sight of God, until both we and all our deeds be purified by the divine Spirit..... This thing [our deliverance from the bondage of sin] once done, then whatsoever we do in Christ and in our new regeneration must needs be allowed before God, and received as an accepted sacrifice.<sup>2</sup>

1. News out of Heaven, P i, p.46.

2. David's Harp (ninth string), P i, p.292.

Christ is therefore "the beginning and ending of all our salvation",<sup>1</sup> and both the 'justiciaries'<sup>2</sup> and those who rely upon the merit earned by works of supererogation<sup>3</sup> stand condemned.

Whosoever seeketh salvation at the hand of any other but at Christ's alone, he doth not only deceive himself, but also rob Christ of his office, deprive him of his glory, blaspheme his blessed name, tread under foot his most precious blood, and utterly maketh of none effect the whole mystery of Christ's incarnation.<sup>4</sup>

Only through faith can we experience and appropriate Christ's saving work accomplished once and for all on our behalf;<sup>5</sup> without it, "God's goodness profiteth us nothing at all".<sup>6</sup> These and similar

1. Banquet (second dish), P i, p.75, marg. note.
2. 'Justiciaries' = Pelagians, those who trust in their own capacity to attain righteousness; see News out of Heaven, P i, p.42; Potation, P.i, p. 118; Pathway unto Prayer, vii, P i, p.137.
3. cf Banquet (fourth dish), P i, p.81; Pathway unto Prayer, lii, P i, p.185.
4. New Year's Gift, P i, p.312.
5. cf Banquet (third dish) P i, p.79.
6. Pathway unto Prayer, xvi, marg. note, P i, p. 147.

expressions, which occur frequently, and a noticeable absence of reference to the Sacraments and to grace, sufficiently indicate the provenance and tendencies of Becon's theological ideas during 1541-1543.

Again, his emphasis upon the scriptures as alone and "without any man's doctrine"<sup>1</sup> sufficient for salvation, and as the only place where Christ and his truth can be learned,<sup>2</sup> would not escape the vigilance of the orthodox, even if they could seize upon nothing worthy of retraction. Moreover, his works, with their liberal use of biblical quotation and their incidental commentaries and expositions, were enabling the common people to continue their reading of the Word of God as it were at second-hand, just when the privilege of possessing and studying their own Bibles had been denied them.

Nor — a small point, perhaps, yet one which

1. Pathway unto Prayer, v, P i, p.134, marg. note.

2. Potation, preface, P i, p.87.



would tell against him — nor would it be overlooked that his abusive use of the word 'papist'<sup>1</sup> contravened the spirit, if not the letter, of the injunction in the royal proclamation of 1539 that

...no person or persons shal from henceforth slanderously and maliciously name or cal other Papist or heretic, unless the person or persons, so using themselves, can and do lawfully and justly prove the same to be true, upon pain of.....<sup>2</sup>

That Becon employed this epithet generally and not particularly would hardly mitigate his offence in the eyes of any who were seeking grounds upon which to proceed against him.

Although at the time severe action was being taken against 'sacramentaries', the recantation contains no mention of heretical opinions in regard to the Mass — with the exception, of course, of the reference to Becon's offensive preaching in

1. P i, pp.43, 127, and 182.

2. Strype, Eccl.Mem., I.ii, p.435 (Records CX); see ibid, I.i, pp.547-548 also; and Dixon HCE, ii, p.135.

the recapitulation of his first retraction. The reason for this seems to be that in the writings of this period he so carefully avoided the subject that the authorities found nothing objectionable of which to accuse him. But this omission was due, and would no doubt be ascribed, to other motives than reluctance to enter the contemporary controversy. When it became dangerous to write or speak against the Mass, the negative course of ignoring it entirely might be only a little less effective. Thus, there is no allusion to it in the Pathway unto Prayer, and in the Policy of War<sup>1</sup> the forms of public prayer recommended do not include any offering of the Mass. During the time of fighting, sermons are prescribed, after which the congregation are to "fall earnestly unto prayer", and afterwards return quietly home. Similarly, when victory has been won, "let the people gather together, and the preacher make a solemn sermon unto them"; this done, "let all the people...with

1. P i, p.259.

joyful voices sing hearty praises to our Lord God". No mention is made of any Mass of thanksgiving, still less of the communion of the people. The short section in the Potation<sup>1</sup> which treats of the Easter Mass at which the faithful received the Sacrament, simply emphasizes the need for proper preparation beforehand and thanksgiving afterwards, and appropriate prayers are provided. Becon's intention in thus passing over the Mass could hardly be misconstrued, either by those who sympathized with him, or by those who were on the look-out for heresy.

On the other hand, there are features in the writings now under consideration to which no exception could have been taken — which seem intended, in fact, to convey as favourable an impression of the author as possible.

We have already remarked upon Becon's fulsome eulogies of the king and his services to the cause

1. P i, pp.117-121.

of the Reformation. To these are added repeated injunctions to obedience, supported by a high doctrine of the divinely ordained position and power of the prince or civil magistrate. The subject is treated at length in the Nosegay (third flower — Faithful Obedience), and there is a note almost of anxiety in Becon's words at the conclusion of the Potation:

Above all things, as I have ever exhorted you, be obedient to the king's grace's majesty, yea, and that not only for fear, but much more for conscience sake, in all things, as it becometh faithful subjects,

to which the accompanying marginal note adds its emphasis:

Mark well for true obedience toward the king's gracious [1542 — grace's] majesty.<sup>1</sup>

In the Policy of War, as we have seen, he is at pains to declare his patriotism and concern for the welfare of his native land, and in the last chapter of the Pathway unto Prayer he bids the pious reader

1. P i, p.121.

pray

...for the preservation of the king's most excellent majesty, and for the prosperous success of his entirely beloved son, Edward our prince, that most angelic imp.<sup>1</sup>

In contrasting the "true and christian fast" which consists "not only....in the abstinence of meats, but also in the forsaking of sin", with the "popish and false fast" which he represents as an indulgence in dainty living, Becon invokes the support of the royal theologian.

And because ye shall not doubt of this doctrine concerning fasting, know you, that the king's most royal majesty also, in his proclamation concerning eating of white meats this time of Lent, hath there no less prudently than godly set forth the very same thing, that hitherto I have taught you.<sup>2</sup>

1. Ch.lv, P i, p.187.

2. Potation (of fasting), P i, pp.106-107. The Proclamation was issued on 6 February 1541-2 (L & P Henry VIII, xvii, p.38, no.85) and repeated on 9 February 1542-3. Foxe, v, pp.463-464, gives the text, but only mentions one proclamation — that of 1542-3. The relevant portion is: "[Let all] rather endeavour themselves, to their possible powers, with this liberty of eating of white meats, to observe also that fast which God most specially requir-eth of them; that is to say, to renounce the



Becon's views on auricular confession are also orthodox. It had been pronounced in the Six Articles Act

...expedient and necessary to be retained and continued, used and frequented in the Church of God,<sup>1</sup>

and had been commended in the Necessary Doctrine and Erudition.<sup>2</sup> He, too, expresses approval:

Why auricular confession should be condemned and exiled from the bounds of christianity, I see no cause; but that it should be approved, retained, maintained, and used, I find causes many, yea, and those right urgent and necessary.

It had admittedly been abused in the past,

...yet ought it not therefore to be rejected and cast away, but rather restored to the old purity, and to the use for which it was first instituted.<sup>3</sup>

world and the devil, with all their pomps and works, and also to subdue and repress their carnal affections and the corrupt works of the flesh, according to their vow and profession made at the font-stone.

1. Gee and Hardy, Documents, p.306.
2. Formularies, pp.260-261.
3. Potation (of Confession), P i, p.100.

Then he proceeds to enlarge upon its commodities; to explain the meaning of absolution — "a preaching of the free deliverance from all our sins through Christ's blood";<sup>1</sup> and finally, to urge men to make their confessions in compliance with the orders of the Supreme Head:

Therefore, to make few words concerning this matter, disdain ye not to go to confession at the times appointed, according to the act<sup>2</sup> of our most excellent king, yea, and that with all humble reverence. Declare the diseases of your souls unfeignedly..... Follow the godly and wholesome admonitions of your ghostly father.... And when he shall rehearse unto you the most sweet and comfortable words of absolution, give earnest faith unto them, being undoubtedly persuaded that your sins at that time be assuredly forgiven you, as though God himself had spoken them....<sup>3</sup>

These passages relating to auricular confession were retained when Becon revised the Potation for inclusion in the folio edition, doubtless because they were still relevant in view of the references

1. ibid, P i, p.101.

2. The Six Articles.

3. Potation, P i, p.102.

to the practice in the second exhortation at the Communion,<sup>1</sup> and in the office for the Visitation of the Sick.<sup>2</sup> A comparison of the folio version of the Potation with the text of the first edition of 1542, however, clearly demonstrates the conservative character of the latter.<sup>3</sup>

In several places Becon does his best to guard against misunderstanding. Having shown that a Christian man may pray in any place, he continues, against a marginal note, "Slander not, ye sycophants":

I have not spoken these things to make any person for to have the less devotion to go unto the church and accustomed place of prayer, when time requireth, (which thing God forbid that any man contrary to my meaning should gather of these my words, or thereby be occasioned the less to observe and keep the commendable order of this realm now-a-days used among us !). ....<sup>4</sup>

1. Brightman, The English Rite, ii, p.673.
2. ibid, p.828.
3. See Detached Note E.
4. Pathway unto Prayer, xxiv, P i, p.159. of the view taken by Becon in a much later work, The Acts of Christ and of Antichrist, II, Doctrine, § 73, P iii, p.533.

He warns against an extreme view of justification by faith, notwithstanding that he himself, as it appears from other passages, was inclined to hold advanced opinions in this respect:

Many in these our days glory much of the name of faith, and contend mainly that we are justified only and freely by faith, yea, and that without works. Let no man deceive himself.... —

faith must be accompanied by the purpose and, when occasion offers, the performance of good works.<sup>1</sup>

And at the beginning of the Potation a marginal note warns the reader: "Slander not the author, that he teacheth faith without good works".<sup>2</sup>

Of his works in general Becon says:

I submit them all with most submission and humility of mind to the sincere judgements of them that are ghostly learned and taught of God in Christ's Church, to be judged, tried, and examined by the infallible verity of God's word.<sup>3</sup>

1. David's Harp (second string), P i, p.272.

2. ibid, p.91.

3. Preface, Potation, P i, p.88.

He teaches nothing of his own brain,<sup>1</sup> and acknowledges that

...next unto the holy scriptures, I owe the chief and principal honour to the writings of the catholic doctors, to whom I cleave as unto an holy anchor, whom I follow as great lights to shew me how I may walk in the way of truth, whom I reverence as my most faithful teachers.<sup>2</sup>

Yet as even they have erred in some matters, so may others:

...this I desire all men that be ghostly learned, and walk after the order of charity, to understand also of all my works which I have hitherto written, or shall hereafter, if the will of God so be, and to believe them no further than that holy scripture testify that they be true. For I am a man and a liar of myself, and therefore may I err so well as many learned and ancient doctors have done before me.

The force of this disarming plea for fairness would be greatly diminished, so far as conservative and Henrician critics were concerned, by the fact that all appeal to the traditions and teaching of the Church is apparently excluded. Bacon continues,

1. Potation (of Fasting), P i, p.107.

2. David's Harp (fourth string), P i, p.278.



doubtless with more hope than assurance:

Let the spirit of charity, and not of contention, reign among us. If we err, let us charitably monish one another, bear one with another, instruct one another; and not straightways furiously condemn whatsoever at the first blush liketh not our carnal judgements, no, nor yet at every little fault be ready to cast the ignorant offenders into prison, chains, stocks, and fire.<sup>1</sup>

— a plea for toleration which went unheeded by his opponents, and was all too soon forgotten by the author himself.

To conclude this examination of Becon's early works, let us once again glance at the most conservative and, in some respects, the most interesting of them — the Potation for Lent. After dealing with the three parts of penance, and with fasting, he goes on to expound the significance of certain ceremonies used in the Church at the time of Lent. This section is worth comparing with the relevant portions of a Rationale of ceremonies prepared by part of the Commission which compiled the

1. ibid., P 1, p.279.

Necessary Doctrine and Erudition, and with that  
formulary itself.<sup>1</sup>

First Becon describes the giving of ashes on  
Ash Wednesday, which

...preacheth unto us, that we are nothing but  
ashes, dust, and earth, and to that we shall  
return again.<sup>2</sup>

This explanation is almost that of the Necessary  
Doctrine:

Giving ashes on Ash-Wednesday doth put us  
in remembrance that every Christian man should  
consider that he is but ashes and earth, and  
thereunto he shall return.

The wording of the Rationale is different, but the

1. See Dixon, HCE, ii, pp.311-313, and the note on  
p.313. Strype, Eccl.Mem., I.i, p.546 ascribes  
the Rationale or Book of Ceremonies to 1539,  
but without sufficient reason, and Dixon sug-  
gests that it was never in fact brought before  
Convocation. The document may be found printed  
in full in Eccl.Mem. I.ii, pp.411-433 (Appendix  
CIX). The Potation was composed one year before  
the Necessary Doctrine and Erudition was put  
forth; the latter, under the exposition of the  
Fourth Commandment, gives a summary account of  
certain ceremonies and their meaning, see Form-  
ularies, pp.310-311.

2. P i, p.110.

sense is the same:

...to put us in remembrance, in the beginning of Lent, of our frail nature, and the uncertainty of this life here.<sup>1</sup>

Next comes the covering of the images and the veiling of the cross. Becon refers to the latter in his account of the Palm Sunday ceremonies; it signifies

...Christ the Son of God, which, being promised of the Father to the Jews in the old law, was not then come, but only adumbrated, shadowed, and prefigured by certain types, figures, ceremonies.....&c.<sup>2</sup>

With this may be compared the Rationale, which speaks of the covering of both cross and images as signifying

...not only the darkness of infidelity, which covered the face of the Jews in the Old Testament, but also the dark knowledg that they had of Christ.....and the same partly is signified by the vail, which hid the secrets of

1. Eccl. Mem., I.ii, p.429.

2. P i, p.112.

sancta sanctorum from the people; and in the time of Christ's passion was opened....<sup>1</sup>

The covering of the images has, according to Becon, other meanings. It signifies

...that they that are sinners, and have a pleasure still therein to remain, are not worthy to behold the saints in heaven, which are represented by those images; neither shall they at any time come unto that glory whereof the saints already have the fruition, except they repent them of their wicked living....

It also declares

...the mourning and lamentation of sinners for their ungodly manners,

and, he characteristically points out, reminds us that

...although we have in any part of the year past committed idolatry with them [the images], yet at this time we should utterly give over this abomination, and only cleave to God and to his exceeding great mercy....<sup>2</sup>

While the Book of Ceremonies and the Necessary

1. Eccl. Mem., I.ii, p.429.

2. P i, p.111.

Doctrine and Erudition, in almost identical words, explain the bearing of Palms on Palm Sunday simply as

...in memory of receiving of Christ into Jerusalem a little before his death; that we may have the same desire to receive him into our hearts,<sup>1</sup>

Becon gives a long and full account of the ceremonies used in connexion with the Palm Sunday processions, and their meaning, which is of the greatest interest. There is no need, however, to enter here into its details.<sup>2</sup>

He then passes to the washing of the altars on Maundy Thursday, which he explains as a reminder

...how Christ washed his disciples' feet at his maundy, that we in like manner should be ready at all times to do good unto our christian brothers....<sup>3</sup>

The Necessary Doctrine makes no reference to this

1. Book of Ceremonies, Eccl. Mem., I.ii, p.429.

2. P i, pp.112-116.

3. ibid.



ceremony, but the Rationale teaches that it signifies that

...we ought much more to prepare and wash our minds and consciences at all times; and especially at this time, for the more worthy receiving of the....most high Sacrament.<sup>1</sup>

Of some of the ceremonies explained in the Rationale Becon makes no mention — the services of Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday before Easter, the hallowing of the oil and chrism, the creeping to the cross,<sup>2</sup> the preparing and adorning of the sepulchre,<sup>2</sup> the hallowing of the font, and the ceremonies of the resurrection on Easter morning. He does, however, refer to the garnishing of the church on Easter Day.<sup>3</sup>

Nothing in this part of the Potation was omitted on revision, but alterations were made to indicate that the practices were ones which obtained in the Church during the times of superstition.

1. Eccl. Mem., I.ii, p.431.

2. These are mentioned in the Necessary Doctrine.

3. P i, pp.116-117.

But it is interesting to note that in 1542 Becon seems not to have disapproved of most of the ceremonies; had he done so, he would hardly have described and explained them at such length. But from the fact that he only mentions some (the hallowing of the oil, chrism. and font, and the creeping to the cross) in passing, we may perhaps infer that he could not commend them as edifying in the same degree as the others.

### VIII

The works written by Becon during his retirement in Kent have been considered in greater detail than most of his subsequent compositions will demand. Not only do they constitute almost one third of his whole output, but they required full examination, first, to show the development of his ideas, and the reasons which made the authorities take action against him, and second, in order that we may attempt to determine whether he adopted, or was directed to adopt, any special method or policy in his new manner of teaching the people.

Making due allowance for the polemical demands

of the work in which he was engaged, we can say that Becon's writings and recantation clearly show the extent to which he had come under the influence of Lutheran ideas. But certain inconsistencies are to be detected. In some respects his views are advanced; in others, they are moderate if not conservative; while in others again, he does not deviate from the orthodoxy of the third English Confession. Occasionally his rhetoric seems to have carried him further than he intended or foresaw, but the ambiguities and even contradictions which appear suggest that he had not completely thought out his position — that he was, indeed, uncertain where he ought to stand. Enthusiasm for the Reformation, loyalty to the king and the supremacy, attachment to many of the old ways, the over-boldness of self-consequence and the timid circumspection of a sensitive character — all combine to make him at once decided and undecided. He too, like Bilney, reflects the perplexity of his time, a perplexity intensified for him, as for many of his contemporaries, by the conflicting claims of religious and national loyalties.

But the inconsistencies also tend to confirm the suggestion made earlier, that Becon's retirement into Kent under the cover of a disguise and a pseudonym was part of a scheme whereby he was enabled to continue as a writer the services to the protestant cause which he had up till then rendered as a preacher. Eleven treatises — the shortest containing over 17,000 words, and the longest, over 42,000 — and one long preface, was no mean achievement, especially when accomplished during the brief times which he could "conveniently suffocate and steal away from the institution and teaching" of his pupils. But they are not, in the strict sense, theological works; there is no attempt to work out constructively a solution either to any great contemporary problem, or to the writer's personal difficulties. Instead, arguments are followed out to a conclusion, or a case is built up, simply by proceeding from one assertion, with its appropriate biblical or patristic proof, to another. Each work is a piece of propaganda designed to establish the protestant view — and it is as propaganda that each one must be approached.

When we do so, an explanation of the moderate and orthodox elements in the writings immediately suggests itself. Becon's aim was to supply a continuous stream of literature expounding and inculcating the views of the reformers, yet at the same time sufficiently uncontroversial and temperate in tone to obviate, as far as possible, the exciting of too much attention in high places. Hence he carefully refrains from any but the most innocuous references to the Mass and the Blessed Sacrament — for otherwise he would have come under the condemnation of the Six Articles. Hence his very conservative attitude to ceremonies and auricular confession, and his insistence upon the lawfulness of the royal supremacy, and upon the duty of rendering absolute obedience to the king and the magistrates. Hence, too, his fervent professions of patriotism, his denunciations of Papists, Anabaptists, and all who imperil the safety or well-being of the commonwealth, and his anxiety that he should not be misunderstood and misrepresented. His readers, and still more, the authorities, must know him for a true Englishman, an advocate of toleration, in so



far as it may be expedient, and a loyal supporter of the king and his Church. And under cover of such disarming protestations he introduces his propaganda. His object would seem to have been, not to expound or defend the great doctrines of the Reformation, but rather, by continual reiteration, to accustom his readers to the protestant viewpoint and terminology — not neglecting meanwhile to emphasize the paramount importance of faith, and of man's dependence for salvation upon Christ alone. That he did not always succeed in keeping within the bounds of moderation is clear from his recantation, with its extreme passages on the connexion between works and faith, and on the superiority of the married to the single state. Nor can we determine what precisely was due to uncertainty and perplexity, what to deliberate suppression, and what to a genuine moderation of outlook. But there is sufficient evidence to suggest that his plan, and possibly his directions, were to pursue the method of moderation. By avoiding suspicion as far as possible, it was his object to keep before the people during the catholic reaction the teachings of the Reformation,

and to encourage perseverance in times of trial, thus preparing for the anticipated turn of the tide in favour of the protestant cause.

There is no reason to think that Becon's activities formed part of any extensive or concerted 'underground' campaign. Nothing leads us to suspect the existence of such a movement. There is every indication, however, of what appears to have been an isolated and, as it happened, short-lived experiment in protestant propaganda conducted by a young and fluent writer with the support and, perhaps, under the direction of a small group of gentry who sought to further the Reformation in England.

Precautions and subterfuges were unavailing; Theodore Basille could no more elude the vigilance of the Privy Council and its agents than could Thomas Becon. The new author's works, pouring from the press of a known sympathizer with the protestants, soon aroused suspicions which investigations in Kent confirmed — and so, with apprehension, examination, and recantation for the second time, there closed another chapter in the life of the young reformer.

## CHAPTER 4

## WANDERINGS IN THE MIDLANDS

1543-1547

## I

When Dr. Jacobs, in The Lutheran Movement in England, described Thomas Becon's career as showing "great weakness and vacillation in the presence of danger",<sup>1</sup> he was thinking, presumably, of Becon's two recantations, his 'lurking' in Kent, his flight into the Midlands, and his 'skulking' and eventual escape to the Continent during the Marian persecution. There is here, it may seem, sufficient proof of Dr. Jacobs's view, but before endorsing what is, in effect, a charge of cowardice, it is worth enquiring whether such an estimate of his conduct does Becon full justice.

First, as to the recantations: here it is interesting to compare Becon with Wisdom, since

1. p.324.

both abjured together in 1543. The latter, it will be recalled, composed a full retraction of his second recantation<sup>1</sup> in which he declared that he had read at Paul's Cross a "shameful bill that Winchester devised", and that he had fallen into such an "impiety" solely through fear of death. Becon, on the other hand, seems to have had no such remorse or scruple of conscience about his recantation, for which, at least in the form it was delivered, he was no doubt entirely responsible.<sup>2</sup>

Between the two men there may well have been a temperamental difference. What we know of Becon suggests that he would have found it neither easy nor congenial to do what Wisdom did; he would have been too anxious to save 'face', while his friend

1. The retraction remained in manuscript.
2. It is not without interest that in writing about Wisdom's revocation (Jewel of Joy, P ii, p.423) Becon places the whole affair in a different light, and conceals the fact that his friend had actually recanted; he refers to Wisdom's "confutation of those errors which were imputed and laid to his charge very unjustly of his adversaries", and not to the "revocation of that shameful bill".

seems to have been concerned only with making what amends he could for his ignominious lapse. But Becon's apparent indifference to what was, for Wisdom, a "great slander and occasion of evil....committed against the congregation of God", cannot satisfactorily be explained thus simply.

And what, in any case, would concealment be worth? Everyone knew who had recanted and who had not, yet it does not appear that Becon's two submissions were ever held against him. Foxe, indeed, passes over them as of seemingly little account:

What should we say to Maister Beacon, who, although he recanted with other in king Henry's time, yet, in queen Mary's days, how hardly escaped he with his life....! The like is to be said of M[aster] Wisdome....[and several others]....; which all recanted in king Henry's time, and yet good soldiers after in the church of Christ.<sup>1</sup>

We should hardly expect any censure of protestant confessors from the pen of the Martyrologist, but it is impossible not to observe how lightly the

1. v, p.696.



"impiety" (as Wisdom called it) of recantation is dismissed.

The first two of Dr.S.R.Maitland's Essays on Subjects connected with the Reformation in England are devoted to an examination of Puritan veracity, and evidence is brought to show that by some at least of the protestants

...it was considered not only allowable, but meritorious, to tell lies for the sake of the good cause in which they were engaged.... they did not hesitate....with great deliberation and solemnity, to state what they knew to be false....<sup>1</sup>

There is no suggestion that this weapon of mendacity was employed extensively, or by any but a certain type of enthusiast, but clearly it could be a most useful aid to the persecuted. Is the fact that Wisdom's recantation cost him so much distress of spirit, while Becon's occasioned, so far as we know, neither self-reproach nor censure, to be explained by supposing that the former had been assumed to be genuine (that is, an act of apo-

1. pp.1-2.

stasy), and therefore necessitated a convincing apology, whereas the latter was known to have been deliberately false, and accordingly excited no concern ? It has been suggested that Becon had been writing in some sense as an 'official' propagandist; it may well have been understood that if his activities got him into trouble, no questions would be asked about his way of extricating himself. As a martyr he would have been of little value to the protestant cause, but alive, he had proved usefulness and great potentialities. If he came into collision with the authorities, he had at hand the weapon which others had wielded and were in the future to wield. A recantation would satisfy the Council and the Henricians, who, having extorted it, would accept it as genuine; and it would not scandalize Becon's own party, who would know that it was false. The rather flamboyant style of the recantation has already been noticed; is it fanciful to detect also a note of insincerity — and even of satisfaction in a deception successfully practised ?

It must, of course, remain an open question,

whether Becon actually dissembled when he renounced so emphatically his former opinions; the evidence is insufficient to justify a final conclusion, though I am inclined strongly to suspect that the second recantation at any rate was false. This at least seems clear, however: his retractions must not hastily be attributed to "weakness and vacillation in the presence of danger" — and if that of 1543 in particular is susceptible of more than one interpretation, may not the same be the case with his retirements into Kent and the Midlands ?

In considering these retirements (for, as we shall see, Becon's escape to the Continent was a different matter) we find ourselves on firmer ground. So long as no compromise in principles was involved, it was usually considered legitimate to evade persecution. During Mary's reign Ridley gave this advice —

...to fly from the plague, and to get thee hence.....,

pointing out that

...our Master Christ...himself avoided often-

times the fury and madness of the Jews, by departing from the country or place,<sup>1</sup>

and that

...presumptuous provocation, and rash running into danger...<sup>2</sup>

are not required of a Christian. Cranmer, too, writing in 1553, explains that when the Apostles fled from persecution, it was

...not of fear, but of godly wisdom to do more good, and that they would not rashly, without urgent necessity, offer themselves to death; which had been but a temptation of God;

therefore he counsels withdrawal from the malice of the enemy.<sup>3</sup> Likewise Sandys, some twenty years later, declares that

...if our lives be particularly sought, we

1. A Pituous Lamentation of the Miserable Estate of the Churche of Christ in Englande, Works (PS), p.62.

2. ibid, p.65, marginal note.

3. Letter cccxi, Works (PS), ii, p.445.

may lawfully flee from the cruel and bloody hands of our persecutors.<sup>1</sup>

When recounting how he decided, after his second recantation, to seek some retreat where he might be free from further molestation, Becon also invokes this doctrine of flight from persecution.

...when neither by speaking nor by writing I could do good, I thought it best not rashly to throw myself into the ravening paws of these greedy wolves, but for a certain space to absent myself from their tyranny according to the doctrine of the gospel.

For as there is "a time to speak", so there is "a time to keep silence". When the poor are oppressed and trodden under the foot, then "shall the wise man", saith the prophet, "hold his peace; for the time is evil". And we have a manifest commandment of our Saviour Christ, that we should "not give that which is holy unto dogs, nor cast pearls before swine, lest they tread them under their feet, and they turn again and all-to rent" us....

Where things be so ordered that the truth can bear no place, nor the professors thereof be thankfully received, but rather blasphemed, persecuted, imprisoned, and ungently handled; what should men do but shake off the dust of

1. Sermons (PS), xvii, p.335. Sandys quotes as the "licence" of Christ, Matt.x.23: "When they shall persecute you in this city, fly into another".



their feet, for a witness against them at the day of judgement, and depart into some other place, where they may do good, as Christ and the apostles did, and quietly to abide the pleasure of God....<sup>1</sup>

These plain and frank admissions hardly substantiate the charge of "great weakness and vacillation" — or if they do, then it is a charge which must be levelled against so many of Becon's contemporaries, protestant and catholic<sup>2</sup>, humble and distinguished alike, that it instantly loses its force in an individual case. In retiring to the Midlands Becon simply did what would be regarded, under the circumstances, as normal and justifiable.

Although, so far as we can judge, Becon's does not seem to have been an exceptionally strong or decided character, an impartial examination of his conduct at Paul's Cross and after is sufficient to exonerate him from the grave imputation made by Dr. Jacobs.

1. Jewel of Joy, P ii, pp.419-420

2. cf the case of Dr. Richard Smith, (see below, p.376-377 and DNB.) who twice recanted.

## II

The story of the next three years can be told for the most part in Becon's own words from the dialogue, The Jewel of Joy.<sup>1</sup> At the beginning of this work Philemon (that is, Becon) recounts his adventures to his friends. After explaining the motives which impelled him to "depart into some other place", he commences his narrative:

...leaving mine own native country, I travelled into such strange places as were unknown to me, and I to them. And yet I thank the Lord my God, which never leaveth his servants succourless, I, although an unprofitable servant, in that exile and banishment wanted no good thing.<sup>2</sup>

Quitting London, we may suppose, very soon after 8 July, he first made his way into Norfolk, where he does not seem to have delayed.

After I....had taken my leave of my most sweet mother, and of my other dear friends, I travelled into Derbyshire, and from thence into the Peak, whither I appointed my books and clothes to be brought.

1. Bib. I, A 23.

2. Jewel of Joy, P ii, p.420. The quotations following are taken from pp.420-427.

Eusebius: Into the Peak ? Lord God, what made you there ? That is a marvellous and a barren country, and, as it is thought, such a country that neither hath learning, nor yet no spark of godliness.<sup>1</sup>

Philemon: Mine intent was, by exercising the office of a schoolmaster, to engraft Christ and the knowledge of him in the breasts of those scholars whom God should appoint unto me for to be taught.

Theophile: I think you found there very peakish people.

Philemon: Not so. I confess to you that I found there very good wits, and apt unto learning.

Becon's itinerary is not quite clear from his description. It may be that he journeyed into the Peak district of north Derbyshire, and then returned southward in the direction of Ashbourne. More probably, however, he entered the county from the south-east and struck straight across it in the direction of north Staffordshire, encountering as he approached the boundary the broken high land around Dovedale. Among these hills, somewhat to the south of the Peak district proper, he found sanct-

1. That is, reformed teaching.

uary for a time.

Coming into a little village, called Alsop in the Dale,<sup>1</sup> I chanced upon a certain gentleman called Alsop,<sup>2</sup> lord of that village, a man not only ancient in years, but also ripe in the knowledge of Christ's doctrine..... After we had saluted one another and taken a sufficient repast for that present, he shewed me certain books which he called his jewels and principal treasures. ....there was the new testament, after the translation of the godly learned man Myles Coverdale, which seemed to be as well worn by the diligent reading thereof as ever was any portass or mass-book among the papists. ....he had many other godly books, as "The Obedience of a Christian Man", "The Parable of the Wicked Mammon",<sup>3</sup> "The Revelation of Antichrist",<sup>4</sup> "The Sum of Holy Scripture",<sup>5</sup> "The Book of John Frith against Purgatory", all the books published in the name of Thomas Becon,<sup>6</sup> with divers other learned men's works. In these godly treatises

1. 6 miles north of Ashbourne.
2. Probably John Alsop, the son of Thomas Alsop and ? Erdeswick of Sandon, Staffs. See the pedigree of Alsop in S.Glover, History of the County of Derby, vol.ii.
3. Both by Tyndale, see Works (PS), i, pp.29-344.
4. By Frith.
5. Translated from the German by Simon Fish.
6. All Becon's works published up to this time had borne the name of Theodore Basille; it is curious that he does not mention the fact.

this ancient gentleman among the mountains and rocks occupied himself both diligently and virtuously.

How long Becon stayed at Alsop in the Dale, in the large mansion standing north-west of the church on an eminence commanding the dale and the surrounding hills,<sup>1</sup> we do not know, but eventually news arrived which caused him to leave Derbyshire.

While I was in the Peak, I learned that R. Wisdom was in Staffordshire.... He was the same to me that Aristarchus was to Paul.<sup>2</sup> Desiring greatly to see him I bade my friends in the Peak farewell, and made haste toward him. When I came to him, I did not only rejoice to see him in health, but also gave God thanks that he was so well placed and provided for. For I found him in the house of a certain faithful brother, called John Olde,<sup>3</sup> a man old in name, notwithstanding young in years, and yet ancient in true godliness and christian life. He was to us as Jason was to Paul and Silas. He received us joyfully into his house, and liberally, for the Lord's sake, ministered all good things to our necessities. And as he began, so did he continue a right

1. Glover, op.cit., ii, p.20.

2. Does this imply that Becon and Wisdom had actually been in prison together (cf Col.iv.10), or simply that they had been persecuted together?

3. See DNB and Garrett Exiles, p.241, Census no. 303.



hearty friend, and dearly loving brother, so long as we remained in the country.... After that we had passed over certain days in the house of that most loving brother, refreshing ourselves with the comfort of the holy scriptures, after so many grievous tempests, troublous storms, and painful labours, I know not of what friend our dear brother Robert Wisdom was called away by letters, which was to us both no small pain and grief. Notwithstanding, we submitted ourselves to the good pleasure of God, with this hope and comfort, that his return to his old familiars should make greatly to the advancement of God's glory, and to the quietness of his christian studies, whereof might spring hereafter no small commodity to the christian public weal. And so we, wishing one another to the assistance of God's Spirit, repentance of our former life, strength of faith, and perseverance in all godliness to our last end, departed, yea, and that not without tears.

After his friend's departure, Becon turned once more to his profession of tutor, and seems to have been very satisfied with his work in Staffordshire. Not improbably he and Olde, whom Strype calls a "teacher of youth as well as of the gospel",<sup>1</sup> ran a school together. Becon continues his account:

According to my talent I brought up youth in the knowledge of good literature, and in-

1. Eccl. Mem., II.ii, p.47.

stilled into their breasts the elements and principles of Christ's doctrine, teaching them to know their Lord God, to believe in him, to fear and love him, and studiously to walk in his holy ways, from their very cradles even to the yielding up of their last breath. I doubt not but that Christ was so deeply graven in their hearts at that time, that he is not yet worn out, neither, as I trust, shall be so long as they live.

Becon took good note of the manners and, more particularly, the religion of the people in the parts where he travelled. In the Peak,

...all their religion consisted in hearing matins and mass, in superstitious worshipping of saints, in hiring soul-carriers to sing trentals, in pattering upon beads, and in such other popish pedlary.

They stood in strong contrast to the "ancient gentleman among the mountains and rocks", whom Becon compares, to their great disadvantage, with the hawking, hunting, dicing, card-playing nobility and gentry of the time. Even more astonishing did old Alsop's devotion to the scriptures seem, since in those parts Christ had never been truly preached; the wilds of Derbyshire had scarcely felt the impact of the Reformation. But the common people could not be blamed for their ignorance;

it was not to be wondered at, for "the priests in that country are very basely learned". Yet Becon confesses that

The people where I have travelled for the most part are reasonable and quiet enough, yea, and very conformable to God's truth. If any be stubbornly obstinate, it is for fault of knowledge, and because they have been seduced of blind guides.

In Staffordshire he found them

...not altogether unlike the people of the Peak, but that they were not in all points commonly so superstitious: they savoured somewhat more of pure religion. This, I think, came to pass through certain English books that were among them, and through travellers to and fro London.

Christopher: What of the priests ?

Theophile: Ye should ask what of the moving of mountains.

Philemon: Indeed when I was there, they were all massmongers, applying their portass and mass-book very diligently, but the holy bible very little.

But he will not speak too hardly of them:

Eusebius: Were they not, as he writeth of men of Crete, "evil beasts and slow bellies" ?

Philemon: It becometh me to dispraise no man. "For charity covereth the multitude of sins".

Notwithstanding, I would wish more learned pastors to be appointed for to feed the flock of Christ. For they are not such priests, as whose "lips keep knowledge", neither can their "mouth utter the law of God", if any man should require it of them.

Nor were the clergy of Derbyshire and Staffordshire exceptional, as "the childish ignorance that was found in priests at the king's majesty's visitation"<sup>1</sup> proved.

Becon spent only a little more than twelve months in Staffordshire. In 1545, at the suit of Latimer, the Countess of Hertford<sup>2</sup> presented John Olde to the living of Cubbington, a village some two miles outside Leamington, in Warwickshire. Thither he repaired, and soon after Becon followed him.

After that I had consumed a year in that

1. Doubtless the first Edwardine Visitation of 1547, see Dixon, HCE, ii, pp.430ff. The ignorance revealed by Hooper's Visitation of 1552 showed that matters were little better five years later in the diocese of Gloucester; see below, p.228; also Dixon, HCE, iii, pp.462-463, and the English Historical Review, xix (1904), pp.98 ff.
2. Hertford was not elevated to the Dukedom of Somerset until 16 February 1546-7.

country [Staffordshire] and somewhat more in the virtuous education and godly bringing up of youth, I departed into Warwickshire, where in like manner as afore I freely enjoyed the liberality of my most sweet and dear friend John Olde.... There likewise taught I divers gentlemen's sons.....<sup>1</sup>

Of all the places into which his travels took him, Becon declares that "Warwickshire was to me most dear and pleasant", for it "ministered unto me the acquaintance and friendship of many learned men", and foremost among them one whom he remembered from his days at Cambridge — Hugh Latimer. Beyond Coventry and close to Atherstone, some twenty miles to the north of Cubbington, lay the small village of Baxterley, where John Glover,

...a man of primitive piety, "living like one who was in heaven already and dead to this world"; who had "distributed the most of his lands to the use of his brethren, and committed the rest to the guiding of his servants and officers", that he might devote himself without interruption to religious contemplation,

dwelt in a "fair mansion" which he had built.<sup>2</sup> To

1. Among them, perhaps, Basil Feilding, to whom the Sick Man's Salve is dedicated, and who married Godith Willington of Barcheston in south Warwickshire.

2. Demaus, Hugh Latimer, p.468.



Baxterley Hall Latimer was a frequent visitor, and there, in all probability, Becon and he met not once but several times.<sup>1</sup> There were others, too,

...whereof some were men of worship well bent toward the holy scriptures, some were men very godly learned in the laws of the Most Highest, and professors of the same. So oft as I was in their company, methought I was clean delivered from Egypt and quietly placed in the new glorious Jerusalem, which is described in the Revelation of blessed John; so sweet a thing is it to be in the company of godly learned men.

About this time, through the good offices of Olde and Latimer, Becon may have become known to the Seymour family, for not many years afterwards he was appointed chaplain to the Duke of Somerset.

It appears that Becon also spent some time in Leicestershire where, he says,

...I had familiarity only with one learned man, a countryman of ours,<sup>2</sup> called John Aylmer.

The latter was at this period resident at the Mar-

1. ibid, p.368.

2. i.e., a Norfolk man.

quis of Dorset's seat at Bradgate as tutor to his patron's children.<sup>1</sup> Whether this meeting occurred during 1543, when Becon may have called at Bradgate on his way into Derbyshire, or whether, as is more likely, he crossed into Leicestershire from Warwickshire,<sup>2</sup> it is impossible to tell from the narrative in the Jewel of Joy.<sup>3</sup>

Eventually, late in 1546, Becon had to leave his pleasant retreat:

...behold, unlooked for, were letters sent unto me from my most dear mother, in which she required me to return into my native country, and to be a staff of her old age; forasmuch as my father-in-law<sup>4</sup> was departed from this vale of misery. ....immediately after, not without the friendly consent of my well-willers, [I] departed from Warwickshire, and with all haste repaired home.

And at this point his account ends.

1. On Bradgate, see Nichol's Leicestershire, III,ii, pp.661-680. Becon's visit is mentioned, p.667, n.15.
2. Bradgate lies only about 20 miles from Baxterley.
3. Brook, Lives of the Puritans, i, pp.167-168, says that from Staffordshire Becon removed to Leicestershire, and thence to Warwickshire, but he gives no authority for this.
4. i.e., step-father.

## III

While in the Midlands Becon's pen had not been idle, and of the "divers treatises" then completed, three had already been published when the Jewel of Joy was written.

The first of these, The Governance of Virtue,<sup>1</sup> appears to have been composed immediately after his second recantation, for he states that

...about eight years past,<sup>2</sup> even in the bloody boisterous burning time, when the reading of the holy bible, the word of our souls' health, was forbidden the poor lay people, I gathered [it] out of the holy scriptures, and caused [it] to be printed for the edifying of the simple and unlearned Christians....<sup>3</sup>

Whether it was issued under the name of Theodore Basille, or anonymously, is not clear, for Becon speaks of

...suppressing my name, which at the time was odious to those owls that could not abide the glorious light of God's blessed word, that

1. Bib. I, A 16.

2. These words were probably written in 1550.

3. P i, p.399.

the book might have the better success, and be the more free from antichrist's thunderbolts.

The Governance is a directory of the Christian life, consisting mainly of sentences and examples from the scriptures, and its purpose was clearly to familiarize the people with the Bible by means of copious quotations, at a time when the text itself was denied to them. That it was a popular work is evident from Becon's remark that during the closing years of Henry VIII's reign it had been

...so greatly desired and greedily read almost of all men, yea, and that not without great profit, as the often printing of the book doth right well declare.

As we shall see, Becon was called upon to prepare a revised edition in 1550, and several others were published during the following half-century.

The other two works to which Becon refers were written in verse of a very poor quality, and need not detain us. One was a Dialogue of Christ's Nativity between the Angel and the Shepherds,<sup>1</sup>

1. Bib. I, A 18.

the theme of which is that of the News out of Heaven, and the other, An Invective against Whoredom<sup>1</sup> which begins:

Downe with the whoredom of Englands  
 which hath this realme so lōge made bonde;  
 Down with hyr whelpes that are so fonde,  
 Let them al go down a downe a.<sup>2</sup>

More compositions, he tells us, were in manuscript, and "shall be set forth, if the Lord will, hereafter, at a convenient time". There is no means of telling to which of his published works he refers here.

Finally, he occupied himself with translating out of Latin "divers little treatises", the originals of which I have been unsuccessful in tracing; they were probably works by continental reformers. Only one of these is now extant, The Solace of the Soul,<sup>3</sup> a devotional work offering Christian com-

1. Bib. I, A 17.

2. F ii, fol. cclxxxxii recto.

3. Bib. I, A 21.



fort to those in sickness and adversity. Another, The Commendation of Death,<sup>1</sup> may perhaps be the first version of The Praise of Death,<sup>2</sup> a dialogue between man and Reason, which appeared in the folio edition. Of the third, The Shield of Salvation,<sup>3</sup> we also know nothing; like the others, it was probably devotional in character.

## IV

Although he does not refer to them in the course of his narrative, news of the events in London and on the Continent no doubt reached Becon regularly, and from his Midland retreats he was able to view with comparative detachment the undistinguished close of the reign which had opened with such splendour and confidence, and had marked the beginning of the revolution which he was destined to see virtually accomplished. These

1. Bib. I, A 20.

2. Bib. I, A 66.

3. Bib. I, A 19.

events call for no more than passing mention, however, since with one exception they are not directly relevant to this study.

The moderation by Parliament in 1544<sup>1</sup> of the statute of the Six Articles did not prevent a fourth persecution thereunder from breaking out two years later. Dr. Crome, to whom Wisdom had been curate, and Dr. Taylor, afterwards Bishop of Lincoln, were compelled to recant. Several others were questioned, and Latimer was brought before the Council for examination. No action seems to have been taken against him, however, though Heylin says that he "betook himself to the retiredness of a private life",<sup>2</sup> and it was from that time, no doubt, that he was more frequently to be seen with Glover at Baxterley. The unhappy Shaxton was made to drink to the dregs his cup of humiliation. And the stake, needless to say, claimed its toll of the heretics; four, among them the celebrated Anne

1. 35 Henry VIII, 5.

2. See Dixon, HCE, ii, p. 394, n.

Ayscough or Askew, were burnt at Smithfield on one occasion, and a fifth, Rogers of Norfolk, suffered there later.

This final demonstration of the orthodoxy of the realm was completed by the setting forth of a proclamation<sup>1</sup>

...devised by the kinge's highnes with thadvise of his mooste honourable counsell to avoyde and abolyshe such Englyshe bookes as conteyne pernicious and detestable errorrs and heresies.<sup>2</sup>

Dated 8 July 1546, it stated that

...under pretence of expounding and declaring the truth of God's Scripture, divers lewd and evil-disposed persons have taken upon themselves to utter and sow abroad, by books imprinted in the English tongue, sundry pernicious and detestable errors and heresies, not only contrary to the laws of this realm, but also repugnant to the true sense of God's law and his word....;

wherefore the Supreme Head,

1. See L & P Henry VIII, XXI,i,1233, p.611. This item is calendared by mistake, from an undated draft, in L & P Henry VIII, XVII (1542), 177, p.79. See also Foxe, v, pp.565-568.

2. Bonner Register, fol.91; Foxe v, p.838.

...minding to foresee the dangers that might ensue of the said books, is enforced to use his general prohibition, commandment, and proclamation, as followeth.....

Possession of Tyndale's or Coverdale's New Testament in English was forbidden to all persons, without exception on account of station, and none were to

...receive, have, take, or keep....any manner of books printed or written in the English tongue, which be, or shall be, set forth in the names of Frith, Tyndale, Wickliff, Joy, Roy, Basil, Bale, Barnes, Coverdale, Turner, Tracy, or by any of them....<sup>1</sup>

Subjoined was a catalogue of prohibited books — among them the following by "Theodore Basille, alias Thomas Becon":

- First, A New Year's Gift.
- Item, David's Harp, full of most delectable harmony, newly stringed and set in tune.
- Item, The Golden Book of Christian Matrimony.
- Item, News out of Heaven.
- Item, A Christmas Banquet, garnished with many pleasant and dainty dishes.
- Item, The True Defence of Peace.
- Item, A Potation or Drinking, for the holy time of Lent.
- Item, An Invective against the most wicked vice of Swearing.

1. Foxe, v, p.565.

- Item, The Right Pathway unto Prayer.
- Item, The New Policy of War.
- Item, A New Catechism.
- Item, A Pleasant New Nosegay.
- Item, Christmas Carols, very new and godly.<sup>1</sup>

In enumerating the penalties to be incurred for the transgression of this edict, a new expression was given to the royal absolutism; the offender was to

...suffer imprisonment and punishment of his body at the king's majesty's will and pleasure,

as well as having to make, in addition,

...such fine and ransom to his highness for the same, as by his majesty, or four<sup>2</sup> of his grace's said council, shall be determined...

In the previous November, Parliament had almost anticipated this measure with a bill "For the abolition of heresies, and of certain books infected with false opinions", which seems to have been held

1. ibid, p.567. It will be noticed that the Governance of Virtue does not appear, although it had been published some time before — which may indicate that it had been put forth anonymously and not under the name of Theodore Basille.
2. Previously nine members of the Privy Council had been the minimum needed to punish a subject.



by the Commons. More important, however, was the Act passed during the same session for "the dissolution of Chantries, Hospitals, and Free Chapels", by which the spoliation begun with the monastic dissolution was completed.<sup>1</sup> This, and extortions of the now familiar kind, failed to replenish the royal coffers, which had been sadly depleted by Henry's military adventures in support of his new ally, the Emperor. These desultory operations had, however, one consequence of great value — the setting forth of the Litany in English. This was the work of Cranmer, and there is evidence that liturgical reformation on an extensive scale was in contemplation towards the end of the reign. The Primate, whose popularity with Henry survived at this time two attempts to convict him of heresy, was undoubtedly giving close attention to the matter of liturgical revision and the abolition of superstitious ceremonies;

1. Becon's College of Rushworth, in what Dixon calls "a seasonable spirit of voluntary surrender" had gone, with others, at an earlier date: 6 December 1541; see HCE, ii, p.381, n.†.

the Supreme Head, however, remained cautious and conservative. But the spirit of reform, languishing for a season in England, appeared in an unexpected quarter, but attended by inauspicious circumstances. On 13 December 1545, in the cathedral church of Trent, the Cardinal Legates formally opened the Pope's General Council — and Henry was impelled to begin the last of his not very creditable series of negotiations with the German protestants. Like the rest, they proved barren of results. His final overture was rendered fruitless by the outbreak of the war with Charles which had long threatened the supporters of the Reformation. Some five months later the author of the negotiations himself passed away, at midnight on 27 January 1546-7, by his timely decease saving the Duke of Norfolk from the fate which had overtaken his son the Earl of Surrey on the scaffold six days earlier. One tyranny was at an end; what others were to come, none knew.

## CHAPTER 5

## THE REIGN OF EDWARD VI

1547-1553

## I

Upon the accession of Edward VI Thomas Becon was among those who gained the reward of their attachment to protestant principles during the late reign. The interest of friends like Latimer and Olde,<sup>1</sup> and patrons like Wentworth,<sup>2</sup> added to the notice which his writings had already attracted, was no doubt instrumental in securing for him a chaplaincy in the household of the Lord Protector, though whether before or after the latter's elevation to ducal rank<sup>3</sup> it is impossible to tell.

Two of Somerset's family received in due course the customary recompense of patronage; to

1. See above, p.189. Olde was a protégé of the Protector's wife.

2. Thomas Lord Wentworth and Somerset were cousins.

3. 16 February 1546-7.

the Lady Jane Seymour was dedicated upon its re-issue in 1550 the revised Governance of Virtue, and to the Duchess Anne The Flower of Godly Prayers,<sup>1</sup> in acknowledgement of the liberality most bounteously shown to the author since his first entering her service.<sup>2</sup>

The latter work contains two prayers, one "For a faithful man being in trouble or endurance", and the other, "A thanksgiving for his deliverance",<sup>3</sup> which were composed during the period of Somerset's first disgrace. Minor alterations were made, such as the substitution of "our faithful brother" for "our lord and master", but the prayers can be found in their original form appended to The Spiritual and most precious Pearl, a book published in 1550. The title reads:

A humble peticyon to the lord, practysed in the commune prayer of the whole famyllye at Shene, during the trouble of their lord and

1. Bib. I, A 26.

2. Preface, P iii, p.13.

3. P iii, pp.34-36.

master the duke of Somerset his grace; gathered and set furth by Thomas Becon, minister there. Which trouble began the VI of October the year of our Lord MD.XLIX and ended the VI of Februarye then next ensuing.<sup>1</sup>

It seems to be to this anxious time that Becon refers in his preface to the revised Governance of Virtue, when he writes:

Certain weeks past, considering the miserable face of this too much wretched and lamentable world, and weighing with myself that the next and most ready way to redress our miseries is to fly unto God with continual and hearty prayer, I made a book entitled "The Flower of Godly Prayers"....<sup>2</sup>

and in the preface to the latter, apprehensive of the consequences of his patron's misfortunes, he exclaims, "fortune goeth forth forwardly to frown upon me".<sup>3</sup> He appears, however, to have survived the ultimate fall of the Protector without being prejudiced, so far as we can judge, by his connexion with him.

1. See Bib. I, A 25.

2. P i, p.399.

3. P iii, p.12. He uses a similar alliterative complaint in the preface to the Fortress of the Faithful, this time in reference to his poverty, P ii, p.592.



It will be recalled that the Governance of Virtue had been composed shortly after Becon's second recantation; now a new and revised edition was demanded.

Immediately after the setting forth of these prayers [the Flower of Godly Prayers], certain of my friends came unto me, and earnestly required of me to peruse and correct the Governance of Virtue..... I, knowing myself debtor to all good men, and to all their godly requests, perused the book, wherein I found so many faults through the negligence of the hungry printers, that very pity, without any request of friends, might have been thought sufficient to have given me occasion to correct the book, which hitherto hath been so greatly desired and greedily read almost of all men, yea, and that not without great profit, as the often printing of the book doth right well declare.

I have diligently perused the book, corrected the faults, changed divers things, and added many necessary instructions, with divers godly prayers for the edifying of the readers.<sup>1</sup>

With these two works dedicated to Somerset's wife and third daughter may be mentioned the Pomander of Prayer,<sup>2</sup> dedicated to Anne of Cleves, of

1. P i, pp. 399-400.

2. Bib. I, A 33.

which both composition and first publication dates are unknown, though it afterwards ran into several editions. Becon's ability as a writer of prayers, and the esteem in which his devotional manuals were held, are shown by the fact that out of the fifty-three "godly prayers for divers purposes" and "general prayers" included in the Primer brought out in March 1553, no less than forty-three are drawn from the Flower and the Pomander. All the prayers in the latter, with the exception of eight, appear in the Primer. Ten are taken from the Flower practically as they stand, but one, "For Bishops and Ministers of God's Word", gains greatly by drastic reduction in length; the original is an inordinate harangue petitioning for the deliverance of the Church from pluralists and non-residents, massmongers, and sectaries of every kind.<sup>1</sup>

1. of P iii, pp.21-24, and Liturgies of Edward VI (PS), pp.456-457. The prayers composed by Becon will be found on pp.454-476. Churton, Life of Nowell, p.21, n., says: "Wharton's Dream in this same year 1578.....in the address to the Reader, complaining of the use of improper books, says, 'They will have their Palace of Pleasure, the wanton Epistle of Ovid, the bowget of Merry Demaundes; — fewe or none will have maister Becon's sweete Pomander to smell to.'"

## II

Becon also received preferment at the hands of Cranmer himself. In connexion with the refounding of certain cathedral churches with secular instead of monastic chapters,<sup>1</sup> Cromwell had sent to the Primate the plans for the latter's own church at Canterbury.<sup>2</sup> Among the provisions suggested was "6 Preachers, every one of them 20l a year", but no appointments seem to have been made at the time. Now, however, Cranmer delayed no longer:

...he had a particular care of his own diocese, now his power was not checked, as it was in the former reign, especially of the city of Canterbury; which had been formerly the backwardest in religion of any other place of his diocese. He supplied this city with store of excellent learned preachers...<sup>3</sup>

These were six in number, as the Vicar-General's

1. These, with others at that time newly founded, are the cathedrals of the 'New Foundation'.
2. See Strype, Eccl. Mem., I.ii, pp.406-407; Burnet, Reformation, iii, p.211 and Records LXIII, iv, pp.497-498 (the Canterbury scheme); Dixon HCE, ii, pp.221-225.
3. Strype, Cranmer, i, p.229.

plan had suggested, and among those first selected was Thomas Becon; the others were Nicholas and Lancelot Ridley, Richard Turner, Richard Beaseley, and John Joseph.<sup>1</sup> Together, says Strype, they

...converted not a few to sincere religion; as may appear by those numbers of Canterbury that in Queen Mary's reign suffered the torment of fire for their profession of the Gospel.

The Archbishop made Becon one of his chaplains,<sup>2</sup> and invited him to contribute to the Book of Homilies then in preparation. Convocation in 1542-3 had attempted to make "a stay of errors, as were then by ignorant preachers spread among the people",<sup>3</sup> by providing homilies in which sound doctrine should be set forth. Several were exhibited at the time, but in the end nothing was done. Cranmer now proceeded on his own initiative to com-

1. ibid; also Foxe, vi, p.745.

2. Strype, Cranmer, i, p.607; Jacobs, op.cit., p. 324, gives the date of Becon's appointment as 24 March 1547 (? 1546-7), but states no authority for this, and I have not been able to confirm it.

3. Strype, Cranmer, i, p.211.

pile a set of twelve homilies, some of which were from his own pen, and the collection was published on 31 July 1547 by the authority of the Council. In the postscript it was promised that further sermons should follow,

...as well fruitful as necessary to the edifying of christian people, and the increase of godly living.<sup>1</sup>

Becon was responsible for the eleventh homily, "against Whoredom and Uncleaness", generally known as the Homily against Adultery,<sup>2</sup> a sin frequently denounced in his writings. In 1549 this homily was divided into three parts, introductions being provided to connect each part with that last read.

The reformers showed in another way how keenly they were alive to the value and the danger of the pulpit. Highly though they esteemed preaching — so much, indeed, that some appear to have considered it the remedy for all ills — they exer-

1. Homilies, p.155.

2. Bib. I, A 22; see Homilies, pp.123-140; P ii, pp.643-650.



cised a rigid control over it. Licences to preach had generally been required in mediaeval times,<sup>1</sup> and had certainly been necessary during the late reign, but now their issue was considerably restricted. On 6 February 1547-8 a proclamation announced that

...to th'intent, that rash and seditious preachers should not abuse H. people, it is his M. pleasure, that whosoever shal take upon hym to preach openly in any parish church, chappel, or any other open place, other than those which be licensed by the K.M. or his H. visitors, the Archbishop of Canterbury, or the Bp. of the diocese where he doth preach, (except it be the bishop, person, vicar, dean, or provost, in his or their own cure) shal be furthwith, upon such attempt and preaching contrary to this proclamation, committed to prison.....<sup>2</sup>

This limitation of all but licensed preachers to their own cures was followed on 24 April 1548 by another proclamation depriving parish priests of the right to preach even in their own churches,

1. See Dixon, HCE, ii, pp.534-535.

2. Strype, Eccl.Mem., II.ii, pp.347-348, Rep. 0; cf Burnet, Reformation, iv, pp.269-270, Coll. XXII.

and restricting the granting of licences to the king, Somerset, and Cranmer.<sup>1</sup> On 13 May came the turn of the licensed preachers themselves; they received the admonition:

...use circumspection and moderation in your preaching....that in no wise you do stir and provoke the people to any alteration or innovation, other than is already set forth by the King's Majesty's Injunctions, Homilies, and Proclamations....<sup>2</sup>

and finally, on 23 September of the same year, all preaching licences were withdrawn until the Act of Uniformity should be passed.

Eighty of the licensed preachers are enumerated in a list of "the names of certain persons that have had license to preach under Ecclesiastical seal since July in anno 1547",<sup>3</sup> and among them is one Thomas Beaton. Since this name does not ap-

1. Dixon, HCE, ii, p.530; the priests were said, among other things, to have encouraged the idea that for every baptism, marriage, or burial half a crown would be exacted.
2. See Burnet, Reformation, iv, p.271 - Coll.XXIV.
3. State Papers (Domestic) Edward VI, X.ii, no. 34; Dixon HCE, ii, pp.485-486, n.

pear elsewhere in contemporary records, it is not improbable that the reference is in fact to Thomas Becon, or, as he and others sometimes spelt it, Beacon. In the original document there is no doubt about the surname, but a slip of the pen would easily account for the error. In support of this conjecture there is Becon's reputation as a preacher, enhanced as it would be by his appointment at Canterbury,<sup>1</sup> and his standing at this time with the Protector and the Primate; his defence of the preachers in the Fortress of the Faithful and elsewhere is also suggestive.<sup>2</sup> Mention has already been made of the fact that various spellings of his name are to be found.

If Becon was one of the licensed preachers, we hear nothing of his activities in that capacity, but his time was no doubt principally occupied in the service of Cranmer, and of Somerset until his fall, as well as in unceasing literary labours. To

1. It is to be noted that none of the other Canterbury preachers is mentioned in the list.

2. See below, pp. 247-250.

his other duties were added also those of parish priest, for on 24 March 1547-8 he was presented to the living of St. Stephen, Walbrook, in the City of London, by the Grocers' Company who were the patrons.<sup>1</sup> He continued Rector of this church until his deprivation in the next reign.

### III

It was while attending upon the Archbishop that Becon must have heard the interesting discussion on clerical marriage which is recorded in the Book of Matrimony.

...sittinge at the table of the moste reuerende Father in God Thomas Cranmere (Archebishop of Cantorburie, that gloryous Marter of Chryste, but nowe a moste gloryous Saincte in heauen, sometime my Lorde and Master and moste beneficyall Patrone and mayntayner of my studyes,<sup>2</sup> not only of my studyous trauayles, but also of manye others bothe in this Realme of

1. Hennessy, Nov. Repert., p. 386: "Thomas Bekon 1547-8 Mch. 24th.; also Newcourt, Repertorium, i, p. 540.
2. In the preface-dedicatory to the Treatise of Fasting, Becon also speaks of "the thankfulness of my heart toward your most honourable lordship, for the manifold benefits which ye have bounteously bestowed upon me....", P ii, p. 527.

Englande and also in dyuers other forayne  
nacions, a man borne to auance good lett-  
ers and true godlynes, a mirrour of gentel-  
nes and clemencie, a fountaine of lyberal-  
itie.....) .....I hearde the matter of the  
marryage of Pryestes was there in dysputacyon  
verye learnedly and soberly debated; some  
alledging what the aduersaryes had to obiecte  
in this behalfe, some answeyng and confut-  
tinge all the obiections, prouinge them worthy  
rather the nam of abiectyons than obiections.  
At the laste comynge unto the vowe.....I  
harde Doctour Redman, Doctoure Haynes, Doct-  
oure Tonge, Doctoure Taylour afterwarde Bysh-  
oppe of Lyncolne, with dyuers other learned  
men, whyche at that tyme were presente af-  
fyrme and saye, yea and that not wythoute  
probable argumentes and reasons, that the  
Pryestes of Englande are not votoryes, nor  
bounde with any vowe of single life, but that  
they maye frely and with good conscience  
marry.....<sup>1</sup>

This discussion probably took place prior to  
or at the time of the sitting of the Convocation  
which met on 5 November 1547, for during the eighth  
session the question of clerical marriage came up.  
Not only had the reformers in England followed  
their continental brethren in advocating the right  
of the priest to marry, but some, including the  
Primate himself, had taken wives. No concession,

1. F i, fol. DCvi retro and verso.



however, had officially been made to their views; on the contrary, the Six Articles clearly expressed the mind of the Supreme Head and the conservatives on the matter. The third decreed that

...priests after the order of priesthood received, as afore, may not marry, by the law of God,

and the fourth, that

...vows of chastity or widowhood, by man or woman made to God advisedly, ought to be observed by the law of God; and that it exempts them from other liberties of Christian people, which without that they might enjoy.<sup>1</sup>

Moreover, it was enacted that marriages already made by priests or vowed persons were to be dissolved,<sup>2</sup> and penalties were provided for any infringement of the law.<sup>3</sup> The Necessary Doctrine and Erudition, in setting out the character of the minister from the Pastoral Epistles, omits any express reference to his being "the husband of one

1. Gee and Hardy, Documents, p.306

2. ibid, p.310.

3. ibid, pp.318-319.

wife....having his children in subjection with all gravity", and simply enjoins continence.<sup>1</sup> And in the summary of the sacraments it is clearly stated that marriage

...is not commanded as necessary to any particular man, but left at liberty to all men, saving priests, and to other, which, of their free liberty, by vow advisedly made, have chosen the state of continency, who, according to their free choice, must freely and willingly continue in the same.<sup>2</sup>

Nevertheless, the reformers continued to assert the right of the priest to marry should he so desire, and Becon's preface to Coverdale's translation of Der Christlich Eestand is a typical and vigorous exposition of their view.

With the accession of Edward VI, it was not to be expected that they would delay long before attempting to secure the abolition of the law regarding celibacy. While Parliament, in its great statute of repeal, swept away with much other leg-

1. Formularies, p.279.

2. ibid, p.293.

islation the Act of the Six Articles, Convocation urged the abolition of all canons, laws, and customs which prohibited the marriage of priests and religious. In the session already mentioned, on 17 December 1547, a proposition to this effect was exhibited, to which fifty-three subscribed in the affirmative and twenty-two in the negative.<sup>1</sup> Among those who gave their support to the motion, although themselves unmarried and destined to remain so, were two whom Becon records as having taken part in the discussion at Cranmer's table — Dr. Taylor and Dr. Redman. The latter did not actually vote with the fifty-three, but

...being so learned a man, and in such great credit universally for his ability in deciding questions of conscience,

was asked to declare his opinion. Strype prints his reply, which contains, no doubt, the substance of Redman's arguments on the occasion described by Becon. The Doctor wrote:

1. Strype, Cranmer, i, p.222.

I think that although the word of God do exhort and counsel priests to live in chastity.....yet the band of containing from marriage doth only lie upon priests of this realm by reason of canons and constitutions of the church, and not by any precept of God's word; as in that they should be bound by reason of any vow, which, in as far as my conscience is, priests in this church of England do not make: I think that it standeth well with God's word, that a man which hath been, or is but once married, being otherwise accordingly qualified, may be made a priest. And I think that forasmuch as canons and rules made in this behalf be neither universal nor everlasting, but upon consideration may be altered <sup>and</sup> ~~or~~ changed: therefore the King's Majesty, and the higher powers of the church, may..... take away the clog of perpetual continency from the priests; and grant that it may be lawful to such as cannot, or will not, contain, to marry one wife. And if she die, then the said priest to marry no more, remaining still in his ministration.<sup>1</sup>

The measure thus passed by Convocation was sent to the Commons, who carried it in a modified form, allowing, not the marriage of priests, but the ordination of married laymen; it reached the Lords, however, too late to be passed before the end of the session. Clerical marriage, without restriction or qualification, was finally legalized in 1549.<sup>2</sup>

1. ibid, p.223.

2. 2 & 3 Edward VI, Cap.21: Documents, pp.366-368.

## IV

Becon's works of this period present an interesting picture of the state of the country, as seen through the eyes of one of the dominant party.

He celebrates with enthusiasm the triumph of the Reformation.<sup>1</sup> In the Flower of Godly Prayers there is a lengthy thanksgiving to God

...that he hath brought us out of the darkness of men's traditions into the glorious light of his holy Gospel,<sup>2</sup>

and in the preface to the same collection he summarizes the benefits which England had received. Recalling how prophets from Gildas to Tyndale, Billeney, Barnes, and the rest had preached repentance in vain, and how those who had disregarded their admonitions had been punished by the Divine vengeance, he continues:

...of this am I sure, that God yet once again is come on visitation to this church of England, yea, and that more lovingly and beneficially than ever he did afore. For in this

1. See prefaces to the Flower of Godly Prayers (P iii, p.4) and to the Jewel of Joy (P ii, p.415).

2. P iii, pp.65-68.



his visitation he hath redressed many abuses, and cleansed this his church of much ungodliness and superstition, and made it a glorious church, if it be compared unto the old form and state. He hath given us a most worthy prince to be our king, which halt not on both sides, following God and Baal, Christ and the pope..... He hath given the king his majesty also most wise and godly-learned councillors to assist his grace, which unto the uttermost of their power study to set forth the glory of God, to maintain the true and christian religion, and to keep the commonwealth in a decent and quiet order. He hath given us his most blessed word to read, yea, and that in our own English tongue. He hath sent us faithful and godly preachers to instruct us abundantly in the knowledge of his blessed will. He hath driven away the idolatrous mass, and restored to us the right use of the Lord's supper. He hath banished the Romish service and superstitious ceremonies out the temples, and placed in their stead godly preachings and learned sermons. Certes lovingly and very mercifully hath God dealt with us in this his visitation.<sup>1</sup>

Yet Becon knows that this is but half the picture:

...we have no mean cause to lament that with this precious wheat....[un]wholesome tares and noisome cockle riseth and springeth up...<sup>2</sup>

1. Preface, Flower of Godly Prayers, P iii, p.11.
2. Preface, Jewel of Joy, P ii, p.415.

There are reactionaries abroad, who desire a return to the days of Henry VIII, and

...wish rather to be again in Egypt among the greasy flesh-pots, devouring cucumbers, melons, leeks, onions, and garlic, than to taste of manna, that heavenly meat<sup>1</sup>

— and among them he would no doubt have placed such as Gardiner, Bonner, and Tunstall. There are also the time-servers, the "gross gospellers", who

...have the holy scriptures swimming in their lips, and God's book either in their hands or hanging at their girdles,

but deny the Gospel in their lives, and are only "stout disciples of Christ so long as Christ feedeth them with bread". The "disobedience and stubborn papists" still remain, and continue obstinately in their courses, resisting God's word "maliciously and of a set purpose", while "anabaptists, Davidians, libertines, and such other pestilent sects" sow "wicked and ungodly opinions" in the hearts of the people, "unto the great disquietness

1. Preface, Flower of Godly Prayers, P iii, p.5.

of Christ's church, moving rather unto sedition than unto pure religion, unto heresy than unto things godly".<sup>1</sup> And to all these must be added

1. ibid, pp.5-6; also P ii, p.415. of Hooper's letter to Bullinger, Orig.Let. XXXIII (i, pp. 65-66. In 1552 it became necessary to appoint a commission of enquiry into the activities of the Davidians in Kent (see Dixon, HCE, iii, pp.472-473), and the Lords discussed a bill to protect "the king's subjects from such heresies as might happen by strangers dwelling among them" (see Political History of England, vi [Pollard], p.68), which indicates that such opinions were partly at least to be traced to religious refugees, or to immigrants like the Flemish weavers whom Somerset settled at Glastonbury. Froude, History of England, v, p.19, seems to refer Becon's denunciation in the Jewel of Joy (P ii, p.415), not to the sectaries, but to extremists among the reformers, and to men such as Ponet and Hooper, and especially Northumberland, "of this class of men the highest living representative". He bestows upon him in consequence the epithet "large-minded" — presumably for condemning the vices of men of whom he might have been expected to approve, since they were furthering the cause to which he had lent his own entire support. But Froude is in error here, for the passage in question was written at the beginning of the reign, and can be paralleled from Becon's first period writings. It is not always easy, too, to decide whether Becon means by "gospellers" the hypocritical and time-serving professors of reformed principles, or the religious radicals and sectaries, who exhibited not only heretical but also antinomian tendencies. But he cannot have meant such as Hooper and Ponet.

the licentious, the evil-living, and the impious, before whose eyes there is no fear of God.

Seeing these things, Becon himself turns prophet:

If we walk worthy of God's kindness and of these his inestimable benefits....if we be diligent to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace; if we be thankful to God for his benefits, and beneficial to our poor christian brethren and sistern....

God will surely continue his favour towards us.

But if we remain in our former sins and do not seek to live righteously, God will

...bring in again the pope, the pope's laws, the pope's mass, the pope's ceremonies, the pope's limbs, the monks, the friars, the canons, the nuns, the anchors, the anchoresses, the hermits, and all the rabble of hypocrites, and the devil and all. He will take away our most christian king and his most virtuous and honourable council, and in their stead set up some wicked king and ungodly tyrants. He will take away our godly magistrates, and give us caterpillars of the commonwealth. He will take away all godly-learned preachers, and send in antichrist's chaplains. He will take away the pure leaven of his heavenly word....he will stir up one tyrant or another to take vengeance on us....<sup>1</sup>

1. Preface, Flower of Godly Prayers, P iii, p.12; of an earlier and similar prophecy in the prologue to News out of Heaven, P i, p.39.

Most of this prediction, according to his own interpretation thereof, Becon was to see fulfilled in no long time.

Indeed, a similar judgement of God had already been brought to pass before men's eyes; the Emperor's victory in the Schmalkald War, and the ensuing Interim, had proved a considerable setback to the German Lutherans, and preachers and divines who felt that the cause of the Reformation was almost lost in Germany fled to England for refuge. Becon does not fail to make use of the example and point the moral.

To speak much of Germany, sometime a dear mother, a loving nurse, and friendly patroness of all learning, and a sure sanctuary for godly-learned men to flee unto from antichrist's tyranny, a country sometime richly endued with all spiritual blessings of God, from whom also brasted out the comfortable light of Christ's gospel, that now shineth here among us in this realm, very sorrow will not suffer me. O how lamentable a thing it is, so noble, free, and famous a country to be brought into slavery; yea, and that worse it<sup>s</sup>, godly and christian preachers to be banished, and wicked papists to enter in; the preaching of Christ's gospel to be driven out of the churches, and the popish service to be used; the supper of the Lord to be taken away, and that most idolatrous, stinking, and abominable masking mass to be received as a god! ...Of the plague that is



now fallen among them, the men of God (I mean the preachers) told them full oft afore, and exhorted them unto repentance. But all in vain. For, certain godly magistrates and learned men excepted, with a few other, the greater part of Germany, even as in the pope's kingdom, walked still in the works of darkness...<sup>1</sup>

And so he proceeds, as we have seen, to warn his own countrymen what may be the consequences of a like neglect.

The clergy themselves do not escape his censure. Pluralists,

...spiritual men, as they are called, heap promotion upon promotion, benefice upon benefice, deanery upon deanery, prebend upon prebend, and prebend for advantage !

while all the time they neglect their duties. They have no pity for the poor, or help for the destitute;

...Behold their pain in teaching, it is very small: behold their hospitality, it is nothing at all.<sup>2</sup>

1. Preface, Flower of Godly Prayers, P iii, p.10

2. Preface, Fortress of the Faithful, P ii, p.587; cf p.431.

Elsewhere he says,

I think the greatest cause why priests be contemned at this time is, that they neither regard their office in preaching God's word, nor yet their duty in maintaining hospitality.<sup>1</sup>

Nor do those who go about to supply the former of these deficiencies receive their due deserts —  
the

...christian and godly preachers, whom for the most part the wicked and unthankful world neglecteth, despiseth, and set at nought by, yea, and maketh less provision for them than for their malt-horses and ban-dogs.....regardeth them nothing at all, and suffereth them, so much as in them is, not only miserably to live, but also to perish for hunger.....<sup>2</sup>

That Becon's account of part at least of the clergy is not exaggerated is clear, not only from "the childish ignorance that was found in priests at the king's majesty's visitation" in 1547,<sup>3</sup> but also from the state of affairs revealed at Hooper's

1. Jewel of Joy, P ii, p.432.

2. Fortress of the Faithful, P ii, p.611

3. Jewel of Joy, P ii, p.423; see above, p.189.

visitation of the Gloucester diocese in 1551.<sup>1</sup> And if it should be thought that the new men were blameless, here, for what it is worth, is an indictment by Northumberland written in January 1552, and directed chiefly against thise in high position:

...these men, for the most part, that the king's majesty hath of late preferred, be so sotted of their wives and children that they forget both their poor neighbours and all other things which to their calling appertaineth; and so will they do, so long as his majesty shall suffer them to have so great possessions to maintain their idle lives.<sup>2</sup>

But the ignorance and neglect to be found at this time among the lower clergy was not infrequently due to the rapacity of unscrupulous patrons, who

1. The conditions disclosed at this visitation are well known — how, out of 311 clergy 10 could not say the Lord's Prayer, 27 did not know its author, 40 did not know where it was to be found, and one accepted its authenticity "*propterea quod tradita sit a Domino Rege, ac scripta in libro regio de Communi Oracione*"; how 171 could not repeat the Ten Commandments (they had, it is true, only recently been introduced into the service), and 31 did not know where they were to be found; and how 62 incumbents were absent because of their pluralities; with much more — see English Historical Review, xix (1904), pp.98 ff.

2. Political History of England, vi (Pollard), p. 73.

granted preferment to unlettered men and even retainers — indeed, sometimes thrust it upon them — for the sake of securing the revenues of the benefice. Bernard Gilpin exposed this evil in a sermon preached at the Court — though the king, "upon some occasion detained", was not there to hear him. Advising his absent majesty to

...send forth surveyors to see how benefices were bestowed, how Christ and his gospel were robbed and dishonoured,

Gilpin declared that

...he should find but a small number of patrons, that bestowed rightly their livings.... For that it was almost general to observe of every one of them, his farming of them to himself or his friends, and to appoint the rent at his own pleasure. But worse than all this, a great number never farmed them at all, but kept them as their own lands, and gave some three-half-penny-priest a curate's wages, 9<sup>l</sup> or 10<sup>l</sup>.....Gentlemen kept in their hands livings of 40<sup>l</sup> or 50<sup>l</sup> and gave one that never came there 5<sup>l</sup> or 6<sup>l</sup>....<sup>1</sup>

Such was the accusation of one who had but lately deserted the Old Learning to become one of the most formidable champions of the New.

1. Strype's summary in Eccl. Mem., II, ii, pp. 25-29; see also Dixon, HCE, iii, pp. 533-534 and refs.

In the Jewel of Joy Becon had himself put forward some "counsel worthy to be followed" in the matter of the organization of the Church:

It should help very much unto an uniformity in religion, and unto the salvation of christian men's souls, if there were learned curates appointed in every parish; if so many cannot be found, then to place in every country certain learned and godly preachers, which may go from parish to parish, preaching to the people the goodwill and pleasure of God. And let the other priests be ministers under the superintendents, or overseers, and in their absence read to the people the said scriptures, and the homilies, reverently minister the sacraments, visit the sick people, make collections for the poor, and virtuously bring up the youth of the town..... I doubt not but that the king's majesty, with his most honorable council, will very graciously consider these things, yea, and that with expedition.<sup>1</sup>

Becon's appeal seems not to have moved the young Josiah and his advisers, but his counsel may well have suggested to Hooper one of his diocesan reforms. "Despising, it would seem", says Dixon, "the usitate dignities of rural deans and archdeacons", the Father of Nonconformity appointed certain clergy, with the title of Superintendent,

1. P ii, p.422 — my italics.



to oversee the rest.<sup>1</sup> This was simply an extension and localization of the idea of preachers, and was not difficult to carry into effect — though whether the innovation was justified when, as Dixon suggests, suitable machinery lay ready to hand, is another matter. But to the more necessary of the remedies proposed by Becon there were considerable obstacles; not only was the appointment of "learned curates" in every parish hindered, as we have just seen, by the irresponsibility and covetousness of patrons, but — even more serious — there were no longer the "learned curates" to be had.

When Becon was at Cambridge, the universities were thronged with poor scholars like himself, and it was from the ranks of the small tenants and yeomen that the learned or educated classes were generally recruited. Not the least important consequence of the Dissolution was that thereafter the sons of the nobility and gentry, who had formerly acquired their sufficiency of learning in the

1. HCE, iii, p.462.

schools attached to the great monastic houses, began increasingly to resort to Oxford and Cambridge, taking not only the room but often also the scholarships and exhibitions intended for the sons of the poor. Both learning and the places where it had flourished fell into contempt, and divinity in particular was neglected. Latimer, in his fifth sermon preached before the king, on 5 April 1549, said,

It would pity a man's heart to hear that I hear of the state of Cambridge; what it is in Oxford I cannot tell. There be few do study divinity, but so many as of necessity must furnish the colleges..... It will come to pass that we shall have nothing but a little English divinity, that will bring the realm into a very barbarousness and utter decay of learning..... There be none now but great men's sons in colleges, and their fathers look not to have them preachers.<sup>1</sup>

Roger Ascham, the university orator, had similarly described conditions at Cambridge in a letter written to Cranmer two years before. Those admitted, he said,

...were for the most part only the sons of rich men, and such as never intended to pursue

1. Sermons (PS), pp.178-179.

their studies to that degree as to arrive at any eminent proficiency and perfection in learning, but only the better to qualify themselves for some place in the state, by a slighter and more superficial knowledge.<sup>1</sup>

Gilpin, in the sermon already mentioned, spoke of "the two wells, Oxford and Cambridge, almost dried up", and of their being left but one hundred students for every thousand formerly.<sup>2</sup> Nor was the state of affairs unknown abroad, when Calvin could write to Edward:

...in your universities, as they tell me, there are many young persons supported by exhibitions, who, instead of affording good hopes of being of service to the church, rather show symptoms of a desire to injure and overthrow it, not concealing the fact of their being opposed to the true religion.<sup>3</sup>

Becon shows himself fully aware of the gravity of the situation, though he only makes one reference to it — in the Sick Man's Salve, where test-

1. Strype, Cranmer, i, p.242.

2. Strype, Eccl.Mem., II.ii, p.29.

3. Orig.Let., ii, p.710; original in Epistolae Tigurinæ, p.461.

ators are urged to remember the plight of the universities:

Eusebius: Neighbour Epaphroditus, seeing that God hath richly blessed you with the goods of this world, it were very expedient to remember the poor scholars of the universities of Cambridge and Oxford. For if they be not maintained, all learning and virtue will decay, and a very barbarity shall brast in among us, and at the last bring this our realm into destruction. And verily the love of many now-a-days toward good letters is very cold; inso-much that we see daily many good wits compelled, for lack of exhibition, to forsake the university, and to become serving-men, which kind of life is most abominable, and unworthy a good nature.

Epaphroditus: I have not in times past been altogether unmindful of the universities..... Surely I think him no good Christian, nor friend unto his country, which, if he be able, refuseth to help forward the studies of good wits. I pray you, neighbour Philemon, set in two hundred pounds of money, one hundred to be given unto the university of Cambridge, the other unto Oxford.

Philemon: This is a godly and charitable deed.<sup>1</sup>

Only by such benefactions, he might have added, and by ensuring that endowments were not diverted from their original purpose, could a supply of "learned curates" be maintained to serve the Church.

1. P iii, pp.118-119.

## V

The social unrest and economic chaos of the time are reflected in Becon's writings at this period. In particular he castigates the rich for their covetousness and their oppression of the poor, who found in him, as in many other reformers, a fearlessly outspoken champion — indeed, he speaks as one of them, seeing, as he says, that

...froward fortune goeth forward to frown upon me, and daily ceaseth not to pierce me with that cruel darts of poverty.<sup>1</sup>

He denounces those who

...greatly delight in building gorgeous houses and sumptuous mansions,

and declares that

...this curious building, which almost universally is used now-a-days among us, is a great token of the day of judgement being at hand.<sup>2</sup>

1. Preface, Fortress of the Faithful, P iii, p.592.

2. This was bold in Becon, when Somerset his patron had himself, by ruthless acts of sacrilege, reared in the Strand the magnificent palace of Somerset House; see Dixon, HCE iii, pp.124-125.



He condemns those who give their time to pleasure and banqueting,<sup>1</sup> and holds up to ridicule "the vain and foolish light apparel" favoured by the idle and wealthy.

Neither with fine clothe, nor with satin, damask, velvet, nor with cloth of gold, did God apparel Adam, neither did he trim and set forth our grandmother Eve with sumptuous apparel of cloth of silver, or cloth of gold, neither did he set upon her head a French hood with an edge of gold, besides pearls and precious stones, and such other trim-trams, I cannot tell what.... I think no realm in the world, no, not among the Turks and Saracens, doth so much in the vanity of their apparel, as the Englishmen do at this present. Their coat must be made after the Italian fashion, their cloak after the use of the Spaniards, their gown after the manner of the Turks; and at the last their dagger must be Scottish, with a Venetian tassel of silk. I speak nothing of their doublets and hoses, which for the most part are so minced, cut, and jagged, that shortly after they become both torn and ragged.

He dismisses more shortly the

...light and wanton apparel of women...partly because it is so monstrous, and partly because I have not been nor yet am very much acquainted with them, whereby I might be the more able to describe their proud peacock's

1. P ii, pp.433 and 440-441.

tails....<sup>1</sup>

He does not omit to exclaim, however, against their "flaring out and colouring of their hair" and "painting of their faces".

For many of the new nobility and gentry he has nothing good to say:

...they are such as this common proverb noteth:

As riseth my good,  
So riseth my blood.

They think all nobility to consist in the abundance of worldly goods, in wearing of golden chains and costly apparel, in having fair houses and pleasant gardens. And to set forth this their gentlemanry they poll, they pill, they wake, they rake, they sweat, they fret, they gripe, they nip, they face, they brase, they semble, they dissemble; yea, they move every stone, as they say, to maintain and set forth their unnoble nobility, not caring how they come by it, so that they have it. All is fish that cometh to the net: it is good to be taking. Bonus est odor lucri ex re qualibet.<sup>2</sup>

But it is not only the parvenu whom he despises:

...little doth it profit a man to descend of a noble house, if he himself be of base and

1. Jewel of Joy, Pii, pp. 438-439.

2. Fortress of the Faithful, P ii, p. 499.

vile manners, and lead a life defiled with wickedness.... The true nobility consisteth .....in the suppressing of vice and embracing of virtue.<sup>1</sup>

And concerning good and bad alike the times had taught one sobering truth:

...he which is this day a lord highly in favour, and a man of great possessions, is tomorrow a traitor, and not worth a gally half-penny.<sup>2</sup>

But Bacon reserves his severest criticisms and rebukes for those whose relentless policy of enclosure had precipitated the agrarian crisis, and had caused it to be attended by so much distress among the agricultural population.

...the cause of all this wretchedness and beggary in the commonweal are the greedy gentlemen, which are sheepmongers and graziers.....Since they began to be sheep-masters and feeders of cattle, we neither had victual nor cloth of any reasonable price. No marvel; for these forestallers of the market, as they use to say, have gotten all things so into their hands, that the poor man must either buy it at their price, or

1. Jewel of Joy, P ii, p.436.

2. ibid, P ii, p.435.

else miserably starve for hunger, and wretchedly die for cold: for they are touched with no pity toward the poor.<sup>1</sup>

How join they lordship to lordship, manor to manor, farm to farm, land to land, pasture to pasture, house to house, and house for a vantage ! How do the rich men, and specially such as be sheepmongers, oppress the king's liege people by devouring their common pastures with their sheep; so that the poor people are not able to keep a cow for the comfort of them and of their poor family, but are like to starve and perish for hunger, if there be not provision made shortly ! What sheep-ground scapeth these caterpillars of the commonweal ? How swarm they with abundance of flocks of sheep ! and yet when was wool ever so dear, or mutton of so great price ? ..... these greedy wolves and cumberous comorants will either sell their wool and their sheep at their own price, or else they will sell none. Oh, what a diversity is this in the sale of wools, a stone of wool sometime to be sold at eight groats, and now for eight shillings ! And so likewise of the sheep. God have mercy on us !<sup>2</sup>

He describes with indignation the methods of the enclosers:

If they once creep into a town or village they for the most part never cease, till they have devoured and eaten up the whole town.... If there be either farm or sheep-ground, upon

1. ibid, P ii, p.434.

2. ibid, P ii, p.432.

the which some honest poor man liveth, both he and his family, out he must. Had it must be, whatsoever it cost, though the poor man and all his should go a begging, it lieth so commodiously for our new-come gentleman. If they buy any tenement, and let it out again to the poor man, O how do they rack it and stretch out the rents thereof, almost from a penny to a pound ! yea, and some of them, buying house and land in a town, suffer the houses to fall down, and turn the ground unto pasture, the poor man not having where to hide his head..... Some, buying the lordship of a town, handle the inhabitants thereof on such a sort, that they lose divers of their liberties, being in much worse case than they were afore. Thus the poor people be so wrung of these ungentle gentlemen, that the silly souls are like unto dry haddocks. Some Irishman, beholding them, might well think that they came lately out of St. Patrick's purgatory: they are so withered away, even to the hard bones, for cold and hunger.<sup>1</sup>

This policy, pursued unchecked by the new capitalists, enriches them at the expense of the country, and with disastrous effect:

...when they have gotten many houses and tenements into their hands, yea, whole townships, they suffer the houses to fall into utter ruin and decay; so that by this means whole towns are become desolate, and like unto a wilderness, no man dwelling there, except it be the shepherd and his dog..... I

1. Fortress of the Faithful, P ii, pp.599-600.



myself know many towns and villages sore decayed; so that, whereas in times past there were in some town an hundred households, there remain not now thirty; in some fifty, there are not now ten; yea (which is more to be lamented), I know towns so wholly decayed, that there is neither stick nor stone standing, as they use to say.

Where many men had good livings, and maintained hospitality, able at all times to help the king in his wars,<sup>1</sup> and to sustain other charges, able also to help their poor neighbours, and virtuously to bring up their children in godly letters and good sciences, now sheep and conies devour altogether, no man inhabiting the aforesaid places. Those beasts which were created of God for the nourishment of man do now devour man.<sup>2</sup>

Such is the vivid general account which Becon gives of the condition of England as he saw it at the end of the fifth decade of the sixteenth century; it is a sombre picture of the results of the 'revolution of the rich against the poor' which was

1. The decay of the old yeomanry was to some extent responsible for the introduction of foreign mercenaries to serve under the royal banner.
2. Jewel of Joy, P ii, p.434. With the last sentence of the lines from the contemporary ballad:

This sheep he is a wicked wight;  
Man, woman and child he devoureth quite.

the accompaniment, though not the consequence, of the Reformation. The Dissolution, of course, contributed in some measure to the break-up of the old system, but the change would have been very gradual had the new monastics continued the existing agrarian policy — a policy in which they had actually themselves taken a share, so close in mediaeval times was the connexion between the local gentry and the monasteries.<sup>1</sup> As it is, even Becon, always a strong opponent of monks and 'monkery', is constrained to speak good of the ejected religious for the management of their estates and the treatment of their tenants. The new landlords, he says,

...abhor the names of monks, friars, canons, nuns, &c.; but their goods they greedily gripe. And yet, where the cloisters kept hospitality, let out their farms at a reasonable price, nourished schools, brought up youth in good letters, they did none of all

1. See F.M.Powicke, op.cit., pp.22ff. He points out that "the 'spoliation' did not imply a cataclysm so much as an infinite series of adjustments" — and these could have been made without grave prejudice to the peasantry and yeomanry, had the new landlords been so minded.

these things.<sup>1</sup>

This is a significant admission, and many hundreds of impoverished peasants would readily have endorsed it.<sup>2</sup>

Becon ends his description of conditions as they were at the beginning of the reign:

The state of England was never so miserable as it is at this present. Good Lord, have mercy upon us, and put in the hearts of the king and of his council to redress these intolerable pestilences of the commonweal, or else make haste to dissolve this wretched world by thy glorious coming unto the judgement; ....lest, if we long remain in this too much wretchedness, we be compelled through poverty to attempt unrighteous things, and forswear the name of thee, our Lord God.<sup>3</sup>

Somerset at least attempted to "redress these intolerable pestilences"; he became patron of the

1. Jewel of Joy, P ii, p.435.

2. For confirmation of Becon's account of the distresses at this time, and for further details, see Pollard, op.cit., pp.28-32; Tawney, Religion and the rise of Capitalism, pp.137-150; Constant, The Reformation in England, ii, pp. 102-111, and the authorities quoted.

3. Jewel of Joy, P ii, p.435.

Commonwealth group, and secured the passing by Parliament of measures imposing a tax on sheep, and against excessive profits by middlemen and dishonesty in the production and sale of merchandise. But the legislation which he initiated directly against enclosures met with determined opposition from the Lords, and from the wealthy landowners and merchants of the Commons, while the Commissioners <sup>whom</sup> ~~which~~ he had appointed to make a return of enclosures were obstructed and cheated at every turn. At length the people would bear things no longer, and Becon's fears were realized when his own county rose in rebellion under Robert Kett in the summer of 1549. Their grievances were social and economic, and they appear to have favoured the Reformation. The insurrection in the West, however, which preceeded the Norfolk revolt by a few weeks, was caused mainly by dislike of religious innovation. With both Becon deals at some length in the dialogue entitled The Fortress of the Faithful, from which passages relating to the enclosures have already been quoted.

## VI

True to his teaching about the divine appointment of rulers and magistrates, and the duty of obedience imposed by God's word upon all faithful Christians, Bacon condemns those for whose sufferings he felt so much, when they presumed to take the law into their own hands.

Philemon: .....these traitorous conspiracies and hell-like commotions, which we of late have seen, wherewith also the commonweal of England hath both been disturbed, defaced, and greatly impoverished, who, except an enemy to all good order, sorrowfully sorroweth not ? .....The inferior members to envy the principal parts of the body ! O unnatural disposition ! The servant to rule the master, the inferior to rise against his sovereign, the subject to disobey his governor ! O cumbersome confusion ! The brainsick, yea, rather the brainless head to attempt redress of matters in a commonweal, unsent, uncalled ! O preposterous order !

Christopher: It cannot be denied but divers of the commons have gone far beyond their limits, and taken in hand that hath not become them; forasmuch as they, contrary to their calling, have presumed to do the office of magistrates, of men lawfully called to rule in the commonweal.

\* \* \*

Philemon: .....How greatly God is and ever hath been offended with disobedience and rebellion, with order-breaking and disturbance



of a commonweal, the holy scriptures sufficiently do show.<sup>1</sup>

In support of this a number of instances are adduced from the Bible, proving that insurrection has never profited its promoters, and that sedition has always been visited by the stern judgement of God. The moral hardly needs pointing:

Christopher: Would God that all they, which either were authors of sedition, or consented thereunto at any time in this our realm, had known these things ! then would not they so greatly have forgotten themselves and their duty.

Eusebius: If they had been as well trained up in learning such godly histories, as they were nouseled in hearing popish masses, and such other trifling trumpery, they had raised up no such tragedies. If there had been but the tenth part of true and learned preachers, that there were of popish priests among them,<sup>2</sup> they had never fallen to such disorder.

Here, however, Becon has to tread carefully. It had been necessary, as we have seen, to prohibit all preaching except by those duly licensed

1. Fortress of the Faithful, P ii, pp.593-595. Further citations in this section are from pp. 596-602.
2. This may have special reference to the Devon rebels.

thereto, and to restrict their activities considerably. These measures failing to achieve the desired result, a proclamation of 23 September 1548<sup>1</sup> inhibited generally

...as well the said preachers so before licensed, as all manner of persons whosoever they be, to preach in open audience in the pulpit or otherwise.....

It was allowed that

...certain and many of the said preachers, so before licensed have behaved themselves very discreetly and wisely, and to the honour of God and his Highness's contentation....;

nevertheless, others

...not regarding such good admonitions as hath been by the.....Lord Protector and the rest of the Council, on his majesty's behalf, by letters<sup>2</sup> or otherwise given unto them, hath abused the said authority of preaching, and behaved themselves irreverently, and without

1. See above, p.212.

2. In addition to the letter of 13 May 1548 (see above, p.212) to all licensed preachers (Burnet, Reformation, Coll.XXIV — iv, p.271), there were other letters, such as that from Ridley to the preachers in his diocese, Works (PS), pp. 334-335.

good order in the said preachings, contrary to such good instructions and advertisements as was given unto them, whereby much contention and disorder might rise and ensue, in this his Majesty's realm....<sup>1</sup>

An account of his doings written by Thomas Hancock, one of these preachers, shows how inconvenient their zealous behaviour could be.<sup>2</sup>

Becon is anxious to clear the proper licensed preachers of any responsibility for the insurrections:

Theophile: .....[I have] heard it reported that these new preachers, as they call them, through their undiscreet sermons opened a large window unto dissolution of life, and by this means caused the common people to aspire and breach unto carnal liberty, which while they hunted, they forgot both themselves and their duty.

Philemon: I will not excuse all preachers. For some, as I have heard, have taken upon them the office of preaching uncalled, unsent; and such disordered preachers, for the most part, bring all things to a disorder, yea, to an utter confusion.... But as I may speak

1. Fuller, Church History of Britain, ii, p.315.
2. See J.G.Nichols' Narratives of the Days of the Reformation, p.71; Dixon has a summary, HCE, ii, pp.533-534.

in the faithful and discreet preachers' behalf, which are lawfully sent of the high powers, and called thereunto by the secret motion of God's Spirit in their hearts, howsoever they be reported, certain I am, they never taught such doctrine as should minister occasion to godly people to shake off the zeal of obedience, or to break any good order or politic law.

Christopher: Yet have I heard some preachers, whom I know to be both prudent and faithful, slandered that they by their preaching have caused these uproars.

Philemon: Ye said well, "slandered". Were they preachers, or rather massmongers, that caused the insurrection in Devonshire?

Christopher: Massmongers and papists, as it is reported.<sup>1</sup>

Philemon: Then are the godly preachers free from giving any occasion of that sedition.

Eusebius: But what of Norfolk?

Philemon: Even in Norfolk also, or elsewhere, I am sure the very rebels themselves will confess, as I have partly heard and known,<sup>2</sup> that the preachers were not the authors nor pro-

1. Though there were many priests with the insurgents, the movement seems to have been chiefly lay. Becon is obviously concerned to magnify the responsibility of the 'massmongers'.
2. Becon, it will be remembered, generally speaks himself in the person of Philemon, but whether he had any direct concern in the risings in his own county cannot be ascertained; he would doubtless have reliable sources of information, however,

vokers of their commotion.<sup>1</sup>

Then follow the usual scriptural instances to show how prophets and apostles were wilfully misreported for speaking the truth, from which it appears that

...it is no new thing for godly preachers to be slandered and burdened with those faults wherein they be nothing guilty.

The responsibility of the gentry is then discussed:

Christopher: I have heard it reported, that divers gentlemen have been the occasion of all these tumults and seditions, through the great oppressions and wrongs that they have done to the poor commons, as by making common pastures several to themselves, by inclosing more ground to their own use than heretofore hath been accustomed,<sup>2</sup> and by this means take away the necessary food from the poor men's cattle, without the which they cannot live; again, by letting out their own lands unto the tenants and farmers for so great price, or else take such large fines and great incomes that they can never live of it.

1. Two licensed preachers, Robert Watson and Matthew Parker (later Archbishop of Canterbury) were allowed by the Norfolk rebels to preach in their camp, and tried to dissuade them from their enterprise; see Dixon, HCE, iii, p.83.
2. Which shows that enclosure had in fact been going on for some time.



But as the Protector's chaplain will not condemn all preachers, so will he not dispraise all gentlemen; some are indeed worthy of respect. Responsibility for the insurrections must be laid at the door of the "new-come gentleman" and his kind.

But when Becon comes to his conclusion, he has poor comfort to offer to his distressed fellow-countrymen. His doctrine that rulers and magistrates (and particularly protestant rulers and magistrates), standing in the place of God, must be obeyed and on no account resisted, renders him blind to the inefficiency and corruption of the Council, and prevents him from seeing what the simple commons saw only too clearly — that they themselves must be the redressers of their own wrongs.

Philemon: Well, neighbours, although I doubt not but that the king's majesty and his honourable council will see redress in these things when they have convenient leisure, yet, if the world should go forth and continue as it is, and the rich worldlings more miserably oppress the poor than they heretofore have done, God forbid that the common people, or any kind of people, should raise up tumults, stir up seditions, lift up their hand against the high powers! For that is

a sin which by no means can escape unplagued;  
yea, they that do so run into the danger of  
eternal damnation, as ye have heard afore.

But neighbour Christopher is the realist:

I say, God forbid also ! but ye know the  
common proverbs: 'The belly hath no ears';  
'Hunger is sharper than thorn'; 'Necessity is  
an hard dart'; 'Need maketh the old wife  
trot'.....Ye see the unmercifulness of the  
rich: what, would ye have the poor people  
starve and die for hunger ?

[Philemon: Rather starve and die for hunger]<sup>1</sup>,  
as poor Lazar did, than to trouble a common-  
weal....if they have injuries done unto them,  
if they cannot otherwise be redressed, let  
them complain to the magistrates and officers  
of the commonweal, which are appointed to  
hear men's causes.

Christopher: If the poor oppressed complain  
to the justices of the peace or such-like in  
the country where he dwelleth, that hath the  
injury done unto him, little redress, as I  
hear, can be had, one so serveth another's  
turn, even as the mules scratch one another's  
back.

Philemon: If there be any such partial offic-  
ers, which are not indifferent, but judge for  
favour, yet remaineth there another refuge,  
and that is to complain unto the king's majesty  
and his most honourable council, which with-  
out all doubt will both gladly hear their lam-  
entable complaints, and redress their matters  
according to justice.

1. Omitted from the folio ed.; supplied from 1550 ed.

With these hollow assurances the subject of the insurrections is dismissed, and we need not follow the dialogue as the four neighbours pass on to talk of the need for trust in God and his providence during times of adversity.

## VII

Mention has already been made of some of the works belonging to this period. The Jewel of Joy,<sup>1</sup> in which Becon's sojourn in the Midlands and the social conditions at the commencement of Edward's reign are described, is properly a dissertation upon the text, "Rejoice in the Lord alway, and again I say, rejoice". Its theme is that since music, splendid mansions, riches, high place, nobility, beauty, gallant apparel, the pleasures of the table, the favour of the great, and all other things which men prize and seek after, are nothing but the vanities of this world, and that "nothing wherein we may worthily rejoice" can be found, we ought "to sequester our joy, our mirth, our delect-

1. Bib. I, A 23.

ation, from worldly things, and to transfer it unto the Lord our God...."<sup>1</sup> Of the contents of another dialogue, the Fortress of the Faithful,<sup>2</sup> sufficient indication has already been given. A third, probably composed towards the end of the reign, proved the most popular of all Becon's works, and is known to have run into at least nineteen editions before 1632. This was the Sick Man's Salve,<sup>3</sup> in which the four neighbours whom we now know well go, with Philemon as their spokesman, to visit the dying Epaphroditus. They convince him that he is experiencing in his sickness the loving visitation of God; he feels his end at hand; he makes his will, disposing of his property virtuously, and not forgetting the universities (as we have seen) and the high-ways, to the repair of which he leaves forty pounds; instead of providing for the saying of masses for his soul, he orders

1. P ii, p.443.

2. Bib. I, A 29.

3. Bib. I, A 34; from the mention of Becon's children (P iii, p.93) it would appear that the folio version is a revised one.

the preaching of sermons for the benefit of the souls of others — one at the funeral, and forty at various times thereafter; he forbids superstitious customs and sumptuous displays at his obsequies; he takes leave of his wife, children, and servants; he makes full confession of his faith and a final act of penitance, and declares his assurance that he is numbered among those predestinated to everlasting life; and composing himself to die, passes away as Philemon recites appropriate prayers from the Flower of Godly Prayers. This lengthy tract<sup>1</sup> gives Becon many suitable opportunities for denouncing the teaching and practices of the papists, and of inculcating true reformed doctrine, so that it becomes in the end almost a compendium of the life and faith of the good protestant, valuable for the whole no less than for the sick, for the living no less than for the dying.

The Sick Man's Salve is frequently mentioned by the dramatists — a further indication of its

1. It runs to 100 pages in the Parker Society edition.



popularity. In Jonson's Silent Woman, for example, Lady Haughty says,

And one of them, I know not which, was cured  
with the Sick Man's Salve.....<sup>1</sup>

And in Eastward Ho, by Marston, Jonson, and Chapman, Wolf says,

...he can tell you almost all the stories of  
the Book of Martyrs, and speak you all the  
Sick Man's Salve without book.<sup>2</sup>

There seems to be no foundation, however, for the statement to be found in Ayre's preface<sup>3</sup> and elsewhere, that Jonson and the wits of his day ridiculed the titles given by Becon to his works.

To his patron the Primate Becon dedicated A Treatise of Fasting<sup>4</sup> in acknowledgement of the

1. Act IV, Sc.II; see Works, ed. Gifford (1875) iii, pp.427-428 and 522.

2. Act V, Sc.II; see Works of John Marston, ed. Bullen, iii, p.107.

3. P i, p.xv.

4. Bib. I, A 31.

manifold benefits bounteously bestowed upon him.

Among other things, he confirms from scripture

the fact that

...the rulers have authority given them of God to command their subjects to fast, whenever any urgent cause is offered; as in the time of battle, hunger, drought, plague, pestilence, &c.; and that the people are bound by God's commandment to obey the magistrates and their ordinances in all such things, as they tender the glory of God, the conservation of the commonweal, and the health of their own souls.<sup>1</sup>

The Council had already exercised their divine authority in the matter by a proclamation of 16 January 1548, wherein fasting was enjoined during that Lent, not only for its religious value, but because it assisted cattle breeding by helping to conserve the stock, and at the same time encouraged the fisheries.<sup>2</sup> Numerous dispensations served to mitigate

1. P ii, p.531.

2. Strype, Eccl. Mem., II.i, pp.127-129; the proclamation itself is printed in II.ii, pp.343 ff. (Rep.N). cf with the passage quoted from Becon, this from the proclamation: "...a common abstinence may and should be by the prince enjoined and commaunded....having an ey and mind to the profit and commodity of his realm and subjects, and to a common and civil policy....." See also Dixon, HCE, ii, p.490.

the rigour of the new ordinance in the case of the rich and influential.<sup>1</sup> In the same year Parliament added to the proclamation an Act for the keeping of Lent, which aimed at the same result.<sup>2</sup>

The Castle of Comfort<sup>3</sup> is interesting because it shows how Becon's views upon penance were altering now that the restraining influence of the Six Articles was removed. Its purpose is to prove, "with manifest scriptures, that God alone forgiveth sin", and that "the priest is but a minister appointed of God, to declare free remission of sins to the truly penitent....and not to forgive....."<sup>4</sup> Since

...the ministers of God's word are not to be despised; for they are necessary instruments unto the health of men....therefore it may be

1. Strype, Eccl. Mem., II.i, pp.129-130. A dispensation was also granted to John a Lasco.
2. ibid, II.i, p.211; also Dixon, HCE, ii, pp.547-548.
3. Bib. I, A 28.
4. P ii, p.556.

concluded that the absolution of the priest is not to be despised; seeing it is none other thing, if it be a true and christian absolution, than the preaching of free remission of our sins in Christ's name.<sup>1</sup>

This, it will be recalled, was the view expressed by Becon in the Potation;<sup>2</sup> now, however, there is no exhortation not to disdain to go to confession,<sup>3</sup> nor does Becon attempt to justify the practice<sup>4</sup> — though he does not expressly condemn it, but seems to treat it as a matter indifferent:

...whensoever the minister of the Lord's word, be it privately or openly, shall rehearse unto men the sweet and comfortable words of God's mercy toward all them that repent in faith, they ought to give earnest faith unto them, being undoubtedly persuaded that their sins at that time be assuredly forgiven them...<sup>5</sup>

He would apparently prefer a precatory form of absolution to that retained in the Visitation of the

1. P ii, p.565.

2. P i, p.101.

3. cf P i, p.102.

4. cf P i, p.100, where he finds "right urgent and necessary" causes for its retention.

5. P ii, p.568 — my italics.

Sick:

...it were expedient that all true ministers should pray, that their form or manner of absolution be pure and agreeable to the vein of the holy scriptures, without the intermixture of any man's authority in remitting sin, either of Peter, Paul, Francis, Dominick, Benet, or any other, or yet of themselves.....<sup>1</sup>

The other works composed by Becon during this period may be enumerated shortly. The Principles of the Christian Religion,<sup>2</sup> dedicated to "the most gentle and godly disposed child, Master Thomas Cecil", is a form of short catechism to which are added confirmations and probations from scripture. The Physic of the Soul,<sup>3</sup> Becon's slightest work, and

1. P ii, p.568. It should be noted that the compilers of the Edwardine Prayer Books, "guided by a sound psychological instinct....refused to weaken the authoritative and emphatic form of Absolution provided in the Sarum Manual" (Liturgy and Worship, p.529). cf "ego auctoritate eiusdem dei domini nostri iesu christi...et auctoritate michi tradita absoluo te...."(Sarum), and 1552: "by his authoritie committed to me, I absolue thee ...." — see Brightman, The English Rite, ii, pp.828-829.

2. Bib. I, A 27.

3. Bib. I, A 24.



The Christian Knight,<sup>1</sup> a dialogue between the Knight and Satan, are devotional compositions of the kind in which he excelled. There remain a Latin poem in commendation of William Turner's Preservative or Triacle against the poison of Pelagius<sup>2</sup> which has been printed in Appendix I, as it is not easily accessible, and is not included in the Parker Society edition; and two works, Preparationes ad Eucharistiam<sup>3</sup> and Olfactorium Spirituale,<sup>4</sup> which Bale attributes to Becon and which, if they are his, are no longer extant.

Before passing on, mention may be made of the royal licence dated 25 March 1553, which granted to the celebrated printer, John Day, permission

1. Bib. I, A 32.
2. Bib. I, A 30.
3. Bib. I, A 35.
4. Bib. I, A 36. I have given Bale's Latin titles from the Index; it is impossible to tell whether the works themselves were in Latin or in English. The Olfactorium Spirituale may perhaps be the Spiritual Nosegay attributed to Turner in Foxe, v, p.567 (but not to be found in the list of his works in Cooper, Athenae), and by Bale wrongly ascribed to Becon.

...for the printing and reprinting of all such works and books, devised and compiled by John [Ponet] now Bishop of Winton, or by Tho. Beacon, professor of Divinity; so that no such book be in any wise repugnant to the holy scriptures, or proceedings in religion, and the laws of the realm.<sup>1</sup>

## VIII

We do not know whether Becon took any active part in ecclesiastical affairs during Edward's reign, but as one of the Primate's chaplains, a Six-Precacher, and Rector of an important City church (and at the beginning, probably a licensed preacher as well), he was no doubt consulted from time to time. His name, however, does not appear in the records of committees and commissions, nor are there any certain traces of his influence, though we may be sure that tracts like the Fortress of the Faithful had no little effect, especially upon lay opinion.

Dr. Peter Lorimer has detected Becon's hand in

1. See Ames, Typ. Ant., iv, pp. 41-42; also Strype, Eccl. Mem., II.ii, p. 114.

the Memorial which, he claims, led to the insertion of the 'Black Rubric' regarding kneeling in the 1552 Book of Common Prayer.<sup>1</sup> On 20 September 1552, or thereabout, John Knox, as it has been supposed, preached before the King and Council against kneeling at the Communion,<sup>2</sup> and on 26 September the Council suspended the printing of the second Prayer Book. On being asked to reconsider the rubric which ordered kneeling, Cranmer replied to the Council in a letter, strongly upholding the practice on scriptural grounds, and trusting that their Lordships would not be moved

...by these glorious and unquiet spirits,  
which can like nothing but that is after  
their own fancy, and cease not to make trouble  
and disquietness when things be most quiet

1. John Knox and the Church of England, pp.116, 277-281, 284, 285, and 289.
2. See the letter from Utenhovius to Bullinger, Orig.Let., ii, pp.591-592: "Some disputes have arisen within these few days among the bishops, in consequence of a sermon of a pious preacher.....in which he inveighed with great freedom against kneeling at the Lord's supper ....."; he refers to the preacher as "This good man.....a Scotsman by nation...." — date, 12 October 1552.

and in good order.<sup>1</sup>

Further conference followed, and Cranmer's opinion seems to have prevailed; on 11 October he retired to Ford, anticipating no further trouble. Nine days later the Council met, and a memorandum in Secretary Cecil's hand indicates that at that session some matter was discussed — it may well have been the kneeling — which concerned Cranmer, Knox, and the use of the new Book in the diocese of Durham.<sup>2</sup> At the same meeting the royal chaplains and others were asked to consider and report upon the Forty-five Articles. Some, and among them Knox, objected to Article XXXVIII de libro Ceremoniarum Ecclesiae Anglicanae<sup>3</sup> on the ground that it seemed

1. Lorimer, op.cit., p.104.

2. ibid, p.106; Knox had introduced the practice of sitting during his ministry at Berwick-on-Tweed.

3. See Hardwick, History of the Articles of Religion, App.III, p.287. The relevant portion of Article XXXVIII reads: "...et quoad ceremoniarum rationem salutarī Evangelii, si ex sua natura ceremoniae illae aestimentur, in nullo repugnant, sed probe congruunt, et eandem in complurimis imprimis promovent...."; cf with the final form of the Article (Article XXXV of the XLII Articles), Cardwell, Synodalia, i, pp.15 and 31.

to express approval of ceremonies such as the use of the sign of the cross in Baptism, and kneeling at the Communion, both now for the first time enjoined by the rubrics. They therefore composed a Memorial or confession addressed to the Privy Council, which asserted their conviction that at least, kneeling ought not to be ordered, and that in their judgement it was inconsistent with the scriptures.<sup>1</sup> The second part of this Memorial sets forth the reasons "Why the sytting in the action of the Lord's Table is preferred to knelyng". After showing how it is that

...taught by Christ's example at his holie Table, we syt as men placed in quyetnes, and in full possession of our kingdome,

there follows, to quote Lorimer,

...further argument of a very ingenious and interesting, if not very convincing kind, founded upon the resemblances and differences between the Passover and the Eucharist, and which has all the appearance of having been traced by a different pen from that of Knox

1. The Memorial is printed in full in Lorimer, op.cit., pp.267-274.



— the pen, it seems highly probable, of the excellent Thomas Becon, then minister of St. Stephen's, Walbrook.....<sup>1</sup>

The Memorial appears to have produced the desired effect, for on 27 October the Council ordered the insertion into the Prayer Book of the Declaration on Kneeling. This, while it retained the custom of kneeling at the reception of the Sacrament, attempted to meet the objections of the extremists by stating that

...it is not mente thereby, that any adoracion is doone, or oughte to bee doone, eyther vnto the Sacramentall bread or wyne there bodelye receyued, or vnto anye reall and essenciall presence there beeyng of Chrystes naturall fleshe and bloude.<sup>2</sup>

— and Knox felt it necessary to explain to his old congregation at Berwick why he had conformed to the new Book, with the addition of the Declaration.<sup>3</sup>

1. *ibid*, p.116.

2. See Brightman, *op.cit.*, ii, p.721.

3. Lorimer, *op.cit.*, pp.154 ff.

Was Becon in fact one of those who collaborated with Knox in the writing of the Memorial ? Lorimer thinks it very likely, and suggests that Roger Hutchinson was also responsible for a share in its composition — and further, that both may well have been acquainted with the ideas on the reception of the Sacrament later embodied by a Lasco in his Brevis et dilucida de Sacramentis Ecclesiae Christi Tractatio and Forma ac Ratio tota Ecclesiastici Ministerii, &c., ideas which would undoubtedly have influenced Knox.<sup>1</sup> Here we are only concerned with Becon. Lorimer bases his case upon certain resemblances between the passage in the Memorial already mentioned, and the views expressed in the New Catechism and the Displaying of the Popish Mass, which indicate, in his opinion, that Becon was one of the few divines likely at that time to have held views similar to

1. The Brevis et dilucida...Tractatio appeared in 1552 and the Forma ac Ratio... in 1555. The substance of the former had been preached from the pulpit of Austin Friars before publication, Lorimer, op.cit., p.289.

those of Knox, and to have joined with him in advocating them.

There are, however, considerations which make it difficult to agree with Lorimer's conclusions. In the first place, the similarities between the Memorial and the works mentioned are not sufficient to warrant the inference that in 1552 Becon held opinions in regard to sitting at the Communion which resembled those of Knox, and would have led him to make common cause with the Scotsman. In the Memorial the significance of the fact that the Passover was eaten standing and the Supper sitting is discussed at some length. In the celebration of the former,

...amongst manye other rites and ceremonies... there was one ceremonye notable, that hastilye they should eate the lambe standyng, theyr loynes gyrded, with staves in their handes; the Holie Ghost signyfying thereby their sodayne departure from Egypt, the travell and labours they shuld and did susteyne, togyther wythe the defence of God in their journey towards the land of Canaan; in possession whereof albeit Joshua brought their fathers, yet was not the ceremonye chaunged, but did continewe during the generation, because the veray Joshua that was to leade the elect people of God in[to] all rest and full possession of the kyngdom promissed was not then

come in fleshe. But at suche tyme as the Sonne of God began to be preached and revealed to the world....began the fygures of the law to evanysshe and to cease.

Circumcision then gave place to baptism, and the Passover to the Lord's Supper, at which Christ

...appereth to have dissolved and disannulled the ceremonye of standing before used at God's commandment in that Sacrament. For....the Passover that night was not eatyn standing.... but sittynge, to witness that [he] who is the end of the lawe to every believer by his travell and dolor was shortly to pass before his brethren to the kingdom whereunto they should be fully possessed by Him. For so he manifestly declared: Desiderio desideravi hoc Pascha manucare vobiscum antequam patiar: "most inwardly I have desyred to eate this Passover with you before I suffer". It is to be noted that he sayth this Passover, as he wold saye, the ceremonye of other Passovers is here omitted: we sytt as men possessed in rest, and do not stand as men having a long, desysful and tedious journey; menyng that the journey and travell of the sonnes of God was almost at an end in Himself.....<sup>1</sup>

So, somewhat abbreviated, runs the argument in the Memorial. Compare now what Becon writes in the Displaying of the Popish Mass:

1. Lorimer, op.cit., pp.272-273.

...the Jews, when they received their sacrament, I mean the paschal lamb (which was also a figure of Christ to come and to be slain, as ours is a sign and token that he is already come, slain, and gone), stood upon their feet with their loins girded and staves in their hands, to signify not only that they were strangers and pilgrims in this world, and had here no dwelling-city, but also that there was a further journey yet to go in the religion of God, and that other sacraments were to be looked for. But Christ and his disciples did sit at their supper, to declare that all things afore figured in the law are now perfectly fulfilled in Christ, that Lamb of God, which was "slain from the beginning of the world", and that there are no more sacraments to be looked for, nor none other doctrine to be enquired for, neither the Jews' Talmuth, nor Mahomet's Alkaron, nor the pope's Decretals, nor yet the Emperor's Interim, but that doctrine only which Christ hath already taught and left in writing by the hands of his apostles ..... Therefore doth Christ with his apostles sit at the receiving of the sacrament, and not stand, after the manner of the Jews; even as they, which, travelling by the way, are come unto their journey's end, are wont to sit down and to take their rest. Here we have an example of Christ to sit at the Lord's table when we receive the holy communion.<sup>1</sup>

In the New Catechism the same points are expressed:

... this gesture of standing was also used at

1. P iii, p.260.



the commandment of God of the Jews, when they did eat the paschal lamb, which was also a sacrament and figure of Christ to come, as our sacrament is a sign and figure of Christ come and gone. Neither did that gesture want his mystery. For the standing of the Jews at the eating of the Lord's passover signified, that they had a further journey to go in matters of religion, and that there was a more clear light of the gospel to shine than had hitherto appeared unto them, which were wrapped round about with the dark shadows of ceremonies: again, that other, yea, and those more perfect, sacraments were to be given to God's people; which all things were fulfilled and came to pass under Christ..... Neither doth the sitting of the communicants at the Lord's table want her mystery. For as the standing of the Jews at the eating of the Lord's passover signified that there was yet to come another doctrine than the law of Moses, even the preaching of the glorious gospel of our Lord and Saviour Christ Jesu, and other sacraments than circumcision and the passover, even the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's supper; so in like manner the sitting of the christian communicants at the Lord's table doth signify, preach, and declare unto us, that we are come to our journey's end concerning religion, and that there is none other doctrine nor none other sacraments to be looked for than those only which we have received of Christ the Lord. And therefore we, sitting down at the Lord's table, shew by that our gesture that we are come to the perfection of our religion, and look for none other doctrine to be given unto us.<sup>1</sup>

Between these two passages and that quoted from

1. Of the Sacraments — The Lord's Supper, P ii, pp.298-299.

the Memorial there is unmistakably a clear general resemblance. But the style and argument of the latter, especially when read in its entirety, do not justify the conclusion that it came from "the pen .....of the excellent Thomas Becon". Between his expositions and the Memorial there is a similarity of idea, but the manner of expression is quite different, and no one familiar with Becon's style would attribute to him anything in the Memorial. More important still, we have no evidence that in 1552 he had either worked out for himself or adopted from another any such comparative interpretation of the standing at the Passover and the sitting at the Supper. Lorimer, it seems, has overlooked the fact that the New Catechism was written in 1559 or 1560, and the Displaying of the Popish Mass during Becon's exile on the Continent. The latter is reputed to have appeared in a Latin version at Basle in 1559,<sup>1</sup> but it was not published in England prior to its inclusion in the third part of the folio edition in 1563. It is arguable, therefore, that

1. See Bib. I, A 42.

Becon only acquired his ideas after the controversy on kneeling, and probably from a foreign source during his exile — though, of course, he may have become acquainted with the arguments of the Memorial at the time the matter was in dispute. Considerations both of date and stylistic difference, therefore, tell strongly against his having taken any direct part in its framing. Furthermore, Lorimer points out the striking similarity between the portion of the Memorial now under consideration, and a Lasco's Forma ac Ratio.<sup>1</sup> This is so remarkable as to suggest that whoever cooperated with Knox in composing the Memorial was largely dependent upon certain theories of the Polish divine which had been expounded from the pulpit and, no doubt, widely discussed some three years before the publication of the Forma ac Ratio. It is significant, therefore, to note, in confirmation of the view already expressed, that certain similarities between the Memorial and a Lasco's work do not extend to the passages cited from Becon. For

1. See op.cit., pp.285-289.

example, he makes no mention of the idea that Jesus is the true Joshua.<sup>1</sup>

Allowing, then, that Becon cannot have been responsible for writing any part of the Memorial, is there ground nevertheless for considering that it represented his views, or that he was actually one of those who approved and signed it?<sup>2</sup> It should first be observed that the Memorial is quite definite and uncompromising. Those who framed it did not regard gestures as in themselves indifferent, nor did they suggest sitting for reception simply as a permissible alternative to kneeling. They state that the Memorial is

...our plane confession whye, in the Lord's Table, we cannot admit knelyng...

1. cf "...the veray Joshua that was to leade the elect people of God in[to] all rest and full possession of the kyngdom promissed was not then come in fleshe..." (Memorial, Lorimer, op.cit., p.272), and "Sed nos jam per Christum Dominum verum nostrum Josue (mortis suae merito) in vera promissionis terra (saluti videlicet nostra aeterna) collocatos, residere jam prorsusque quiescere debere", (a Lasco, Forma ac Ratio, quoted ibid, p.287).
2. It is not known for certain who were the signatories.

and bring to the support of their view every theological, exegetical, and practical argument they can muster — as: kneeling implies belief in transubstantiation; it offends the consciences of the weaker brethren; it injures the Church, now strong and grown to some perfection; it gives the Papists occasion to accuse the Reformed of retaining a practice which can no more be justified from scripture than the ceremonies which have been abolished; and it obscures the joyful significations of the mystery of the Lord's supper.

Of Becon's opinion during this period we have no reliable evidence. In the Jewel of Joy, it is true, one of twenty-two antitheses between the Lord's Supper and the pope's Mass states:

Christ delivered the sacrament to his disciples sitting at the table: the papists compel the people to receive it kneeling upon their knees.<sup>1</sup>

But this tells us nothing about his real views; his concern is, not to advocate this or that gesture,

1. P ii, p.455.



but simply to show how the Mass and the Supper differ. Nothing warrants our reading more than this into what he says.

During his exile he recalls, without comment, and in another connexion, the practice of sitting at the reception during Edward's reign:

O how oft have I seen here<sup>1</sup> in England, at the ministration of the holy communion, people sitting at the Lord's table after they have heard the sermon, or the godly exhortation set forth in the book of common prayer read unto them by the minister.....<sup>2</sup>

A few pages later, comparing again the Mass with "Christ....at his supper", he condemns the Papists for deviating from the Lord's example:

Christ sat: ye sometime stand right up, sometime lean upon your elbows, sometime crouch downward, sometime kneel; but sit do ye never, because ye will still contrary Christ, and be one ace above him.<sup>3</sup>

Then, after expounding the significance of the stand-

1. Becon was not at the time in England, and "here" may have been inserted in the folio edition.
2. Displaying of the Popish Mass, P iii, p.256.
3. ibid, P iii, p.260.

ing at the Passover and the sitting at the Supper,<sup>1</sup>  
he asks,

Why bind ye the people rather to kneel at the ministration of the Lord's supper than at the ministration of baptism? seeing Christ is no less present at the one than at the other, and by his holy Spirit worketh no less effectually in baptism than he doth in the supper. Why do ye not also compel the people to kneel at the preaching of God's word? seeing it is of no less authority than the sacrament of Christ's body and blood,

— and so proceeds to inveigh against transubstantiation.<sup>2</sup> Here again there is no indication as to the strength or precise nature of Becon's views upon sitting and kneeling; it is only clear that he prefers the former:

...although gestures in this behalf seem after some men's judgement to be indifferent, yet the nearer we come to Christ's order, the better it is: for who can prescribe a more perfect trade for all things to be done at and about the ministration of the Lord's supper, than that which Christ used himself?<sup>3</sup>

1. See above, p.270

2. P iii, p.261.

3. P iii, p.260.

In another work written during exile, Coenae Sacrosanctae Domini nostri, et Missae Papisticae, Comparatio, later rendered into English as A Comparison between the Lord's Supper and the Pope's Mass, Becon simply repeats the points of contrast already noted in earlier writings:

Christ did minister the sacrament of his body and blood to his disciples sitting at the table..... The massmonger delivereth the bread and wine to his guests kneeling before the altar.<sup>1</sup>

This is later amplified:

...like as Christ, administring the most holy mysteries of his body and blood to his disciples, sat down at the table; so likewise his guests, that is to say, his apostles, sitting at the same table, received that heavenly food sitting. But the massmonger delivereth not the sacramental bread unto the communicants, except they first of all kneel down with great humility and reverence, that they may by this their gesture declare and shew evidently to such as are present, that they worship and honour that bread for a god.....<sup>2</sup>

The last and most complete expression of

1. P iii, p.364; Comparatio, p.40.

2. P iii, p.365; Comparatio, p.42.

Becon's views upon the gestures to be used at the Communion occurs in the New Catechism, written some eight years after the presentation of the Memorial to the Council. Here the subject is discussed in a temperate spirit:

Father: ...what sayest thou concerning the gestures to be used at the Lord's table? Shall we receive those holy mysteries kneeling, standing, or sitting?

Son: Albeit I know and confess that gestures of themselves be indifferent; yet I would wish all such gestures to be avoided as have outwardly any appearance of evil.... And first of all, forasmuch as kneeling hath been long used in the church of Christ, through the doctrine of the papists, although of itself it be indifferent to be or not to be used, yet would I wish that it were taken away by the authority of the higher powers.

Father: Why so?

Son: For it hath an outward appearance of evil .....I would wish with all my heart, that either this kneeling at the receiving of the sacrament were taken away, or else that the people were taught that that outward reverence was not given to the sacrament and outward sign, but to Christ, which is represented by that sacrament or sign.<sup>1</sup> .....Standing,

1. The Declaration on Kneeling had been omitted from the 1559 Book of Common Prayer, and it is apparently to this that Becon alludes.

which is used in the most part of the reformed churches in these our days, I can right well allow it, if it be appointed by common order to be used at the receiving of the holy communion<sup>1</sup>..... Now, as concerning sitting at the Lord's table, which is also used at this day in certain reformed churches, if it were received by public authority and common consent, and might conveniently be used in our churches, I could allow that gesture best<sup>2</sup>..... Notwithstanding, as I said before, gestures are free, so that none occasion of evil be either done or offered. In all things which we call indifferent, this rule of St. Paul is diligently to be obeyed: "Abstain from all evil appearance".<sup>3</sup>

From his writings, therefore, we would judge Becon to have been, probably from the beginning of Edward's reign, a moderate advocate of the sitting gesture, holding kneeling as well as other postures to be in themselves indifferent, but considering its abolition expedient on several grounds, in the absence of some safeguard against its being interpreted superstitiously. His views may, of

1. Here follows the explanation of the significance of the standing at the Passover, see above, p. 270-271.
2. Here Becon expounds the meaning of the sitting at the Supper, see above, p. 271.
3. P ii, pp. 298-299.



course, have undergone alteration, and the passages in the New Catechism are certainly more moderate in tone than the rest. In three places, as we have remarked, he is concerned rather to compare the Supper with the Mass to the detriment of the latter, than to advocate sitting for any positive reasons.

If confirmation of this estimate of Becon's attitude to the gestures be sought, it can be found in the letter to Calvin from Frankfort dated 5 April 1555 and signed by Becon and others of the Prayer Book party:

...when the magistrates lately gave us permission to adopt the rites of our native country, we freely relinquished all those ceremonies which were regarded by our brethren as offensive and inconvenient. For we gave up private baptisms, confirmation of children, saints' days, kneeling at the holy communion, the linen surplices of the ministers, crosses, and other things of the like character. And we gave them up, not as being impure and papistical, which certain of our brethren often charged them with being, but whereas they were in their own nature indifferent.....we notwithstanding chose rather to lay them aside than to offend the minds or alienate the affections of the brethren.<sup>1</sup>

1. Orig.Let., ii, pp.753-754.

Becon seems to have had no difficulty in giving his assent to this comparatively mild statement, as accordant with his own views in the matter of kneeling and sitting at the reception.

Becon did not assist in the composition of the Memorial; is there any evidence that he had a share in the affair? There is, as we have seen, nothing to support Lorimer's assumption that in 1552 Becon held the views to which he gave expression some years later — the antithesis from the Jewel of Joy tells us nothing. Even supposing, however, that he had already, like Hooper<sup>1</sup> and Hutchinson,<sup>2</sup> advocated sitting at the Communion,

1. See Sermon vi upon Jonah, preached before the King and Court on the Wednesday before Palm Sunday, 1550. Lorimer seems to have overlooked the similarity between Hooper's interpretation of the sitting, and that in the Memorial: "Sitting, in mine opinion, were best, for many considerations. The Paschal lamb was eaten standing, which signified Christ not yet to be come, that should give rest, peace, and quietness. Christ with his apostles used this sacrament, at the first, sitting; declaring that he was come, that should quiet and put at rest both body and soul.....", Early Writings (PS), pp. 536-537. Hooper may well have collaborated with Knox; his views had undoubtedly taken on a more extreme colour by 1552.
2. Second Sermon on the Lord's Supper, Works (PS), p. 253.

it does not necessarily follow that he would make common cause with the foreign extremists, Knox and a Lasco, or, with the former, would press for the amendment of the Prayer Book. Is it probable, we may ask in conclusion, that Cranmer's chaplain would have opposed the Primate in a matter about which the latter felt so strongly; that he would have joined with those "glorious and unquiet spirits" whom the Archbishop had so straightly censured for disturbing things that were quiet and in good order? Would the signatory to the Calvin letter have subscribed the Memorial? Would the associate of Knox in London have withstood him in Frankfort? Allowance must always be made for sudden, unaccountable, and unrecorded changes of opinion, but from the evidence before us we are only entitled to draw the following conclusions. Becon had no hand in the drafting of the Memorial; it is improbable that he had any hand at all in the affair; but he may perhaps at the time have been more or less in sympathy with its promoters (Knox, Hooper? Hitchinson? among others), and with their object. Where so much is conjectural, may one further conjecture be permitted? Was

Becon, as the Primate's chaplain, one of those responsible for persuading him to modify his original attitude, while refusing to concede all that the Memorial demanded? Such a role, if one must be found, would accord better with Becon's views, as they are known to us from his later writings and conduct.



*Ora expressa vides, viuos imitantia vultus,  
Qua potuit calimo, pictor, & arte vides.  
Mentis quam nullus potuit tibi reddere pictor,  
Effigiem scriptis, præbuit ipse suis.*



Thomas Becon

in 1553

From the Relics of Rome,  
1563 edition.

## CHAPTER 6

## IMPRISONMENT AND EXILE

1553-1558

## I

On 6 July 1553 the young Josiah "piously left an earthly crown for an heavenly",<sup>1</sup> and four weeks later Mary entered London amid general rejoicing, Northumberland's attempt to supplant her having ended in ignominious failure. Almost immediately began a reversal of the order established under Edward, whose obsequies were marked by a compromise which unfortunately did not set a precedent for the Queen's religious policy. While Cranmer, in Westminster Abbey, committed the body of the late Sovereign to its rest according to the rite in the Book of Common Prayer, with the Holy Communion and a sermon, Gardiner, in the Tower chapel, in the presence of Mary and the Council, celebrated the Requiem Mass. Nine days after, on 12 August, the

1. Strype, Eccl. Mem., II.ii, p.117.

Queen declared at a Council meeting that

...albeit her...conscience was stayed in the matters of religion, yet she graciously meant not to compel or strain other men's consciences otherwise than God should (as she trusted) put in their hearts a persuasion of the truth that she was in, through the opening of his word unto them by godly, virtuous, and learned preachers.<sup>1</sup>

Forthwith the work of conversion began, and the first to go to it was Gilbert Bourn, Archdeacon of London, who the next day preached at Paul's Cross. Foxe says he made "a seditious sermon....to set popery abroad",<sup>2</sup> and

...took occasion of the gospel of that day, to speak somewhat largely in justifying of Bonner being then present.....<sup>3</sup>

This discourse was not at all to the liking of the

1. Foxe, vi, p.392; cf Mary's first proclamation, 18 August: no compulsion will be used, "unto such time as further order, by common assent, may be taken....."; see Gee and Hardy, Documents, p.374.

2. vii, p.144.

3. vi, p.391; it appears that Bourn also spoke in disparagement of Ridley.

audience, and a tumult ensued<sup>1</sup> during which Bourn was menaced and, in fear for his life, desired John Bradford, "for the passion of Christ", to speak to the people and quiet them. Coming forward from the back of the pulpit, the Reformer himself was for a moment in danger, when a naked dagger flung from the crowd caught his sleeve; then, as he was recognized, a great shout went up, "Bradford, Bradford; God save thy life, Bradford." Taking Bourn's place, he

...spake so mildly, christianly, and effectuously, that with few words he appeased all: and afterward he and master Rogers conducted the preacher betwixt them from the pulpit to the grammar-school door, where they left him safe....<sup>2</sup>

1. Machyn writes: "...there [was a] gret up-rore and showtyng at ys sermon, as yt [were] lyke madpepull, watt yonge pepull and woman [as] ever was hard, as herle-borle, and castyng up of capes (caps); [if] my lord mer and my lord Cort-enay ad not ben there, ther had bene grett myscheyff done", Diary, p.41.
2. Foxe, vi, p.392. For accounts of the affair, see vi, pp.391-392 and vii, p.144; also Bradford's own story, Works (PS), i, p.485; Strype, Eccl. Mem., III.i, pp.32-33; Haweis, Sketches of the Reformation, pp.35-36.

The mob then dispersed peaceably and, coming together again in the afternoon at Bow church to hear Bradford preach, were reproved by him "at least twenty times" for their seditious conduct that morning.<sup>1</sup> The same day the Council met, summoned before them the Lord Mayor and Aldermen, and informed them of the Queen's declaration concerning religion, adding that the citizens must be charged to maintain order, and that no preacher must be allowed to occupy a City pulpit unless he held a royal licence.

On the Wednesday following, 16 August, Bradford was committed to the charge of the lieutenant of the Tower for his behaviour at Paul's Cross. his false preaching and arrogance, and his taking upon himself to preach without authority.<sup>2</sup> He was joined the same day by Veron and Becon, both designated "seditious preachers".<sup>3</sup> What the latter's offence

1. Bradford, Works (PS), i, pp.485-486; Foxe, vii, p.145.

2. Bradford's first examination before Gardiner, 22 January 1554-5, Works (PS), i, p.465.

3. Foxe, vi, pp. 538 and 756; Strype, Eccl.Mem., III.i, p.77; Cranmer, p.397.



was, we do not know; he had probably in some way been involved in the commotion on the previous Sunday, and may have referred 'seditiously' in a sermon to the contents of Bourn's discourse. In any case, it was doubtless considered expedient to silence him at the earliest possible moment; it would have been very inconvenient for a preacher and writer of his power and popularity to remain at large at so critical a time.

In the Tower Becon and his companions found Ridley (later removed to Oxford), Sandys and Cox, and from time to time they were joined by others, notably Latimer and Cranmer.<sup>1</sup> Meanwhile, the work of annulling the Reformation went forward. The treason acts and Praemunire were done away, and by

1. Knox writes, "...O thow dongeon of darknes, whair that abominabill ydoll of lait dayis wes first erectit (thow Tower of London I meane), in thee ar tormentit ma Jeremyis nor ane....", to which is added the marginal note: "The Idolatrous Masse of late first erected in the Tower of London. The B.of Canterb., D.Ridleye, M.Latimer, Bradford, Sandes, Bacon (sic), Veron, &c., preachers and prisoners in the Tower of London"; A godly letter sent too the fayethfull in London, &c., Works, ed. Laing, iii, pp.187-188.

a single measure the whole of the Edwardine religious legislation was repealed. The English Service was forbidden, and the old ceremonies were reinstated. Protestant bishops were extruded or deprived, and with the restoration of Gardiner, Bonner, Tunstall, Heath and Day went the appointment of new prelates favourable to the old religion. On 15 December a proclamation enjoined that after 20 December no married priest should minister in church or say Mass. For three months this was not enforced, but on 4 March 1553-4 the Queen put forth a set of eighteen injunctions, three of which dealt with the married clergy, who comprised, it has been supposed, about one fifth of the total number. Eleven days later, in the Chapter House at Canterbury, proceedings were taken against the Archdeacon of Canterbury, Edmund Cranmer, three other prebendaries, two preachers, and two minor canons; in every case, marriage was their offence. Sentences of suspension, sequestration, and deprivation were pronounced, and cohabitation with their wives was prohibited. Three other prebendaries and the four remaining preachers, including Thomas Becon, did not appear, and were

declared contumacious. Some could not appear, being in prison, and others had fled, but all were deprived.<sup>1</sup> At about the same time, no doubt, Becon was ejected from his Rectory of St. Stephen, Walbrook, for a new appointment to the living was made on 2 May 1554.<sup>2</sup> The proceedings at Canterbury are the first intimation that Becon had followed the example of many of his fellow Reformers in taking to himself a wife, although when he was married, and to whom, we do not know.<sup>3</sup>

Becon's imprisonment, which he describes as "long and....most miserable", and attended by

...other afflictions wherewith I was daily accumbered, besides the deceitful assaults of Satan and of his ministers, wherewith I was without ceasing troubled and disquieted, not only outwardly, but also inwardly...<sup>4</sup>

1. Strype, Cranmer, pp.471-472.
2. Newcourt, Repertorium, i, p.540: "Will. Ventris, 2 May 1554, per priv. Bekon".
3. Becon's marriage is more fully discussed in chapter 10.
4. Preface, A Comfortable Epistle, P iii, p.204.

came to an end on 22 March 1553-4.<sup>1</sup> His release cannot have been widely known, for early in April Ridley, who had been moved to the Bocardo in Oxford, enquired about the Tower prisoners in the course of a letter to Bradford:

We long to hear of father Crome, Doctor Sandys, Master Saunders, Veron, Becon, Rogers, &c.<sup>2</sup>

Regarding Becon's liberation, which he celebrated by a versification of Psalm 103,<sup>3</sup> there is no less mystery than about certain other passages in his life. Foxe, our sole informant, says,

...how hardly escaped he with his life out of the Tower, had not God's providence blinded Winchester's eyes, in mistaking his name !<sup>4</sup>

What this means, it is impossible even to guess.

1. The date of Becon's release is often shown erroneously as 24 March.
2. Bradford, Works (PS), ii, p.83.
3. Bib. I, A 37. A versification of Psalm 112 (Bib. I, A 38), may belong to this time also.
4. v, p.696.

Gardiner may have released him in error, but the number of reformers in the Tower at that time was small, and Becon's name was too well known to be passed over and too distinctive, one would have thought, to be mistaken. If he had not been guilty of any grave misdemeanour, and if his arrest was merely precautionary, it may well be that, following his usual method,<sup>1</sup> Gardiner judged it expedient to give him an opportunity of leaving the country. Becon took full advantage of the chance that had been given to him, and

...after...skulking about for some time, at length....saved himself by exile,<sup>2</sup>

and made his way to Strasbourg.<sup>3</sup>

1. See below, p. 294 f.

2. Strype, Cranmer, p. 608; Strype does not give his authority for this statement.

3. In company with Ponet ? See Garrett, Exiles, p. 84.



## II

In her valuable study, The Marian Exiles, Miss Garrett has shown that the protestant exodus from England during 1553 and 1554 has been wrongly interpreted as nothing more than a flight from persecution; it was, she says,

...not a flight, but a migration, and, as such, one of the most astute manoeuvres that has ever carried a defeated political party to ultimate power.<sup>1</sup>

The protestants were, in fact, too few to remain and carry on any kind of effective resistance to the inevitable reaction in favour of Romanism. Not all of them, by any means, had been persecuted or, if priests, threatened with deprivation; rather, they left the country in accordance with a carefully organized plan of voluntary emigration which, so it happened, admirably suited the Government. They were in some cases 'encouraged' to depart, and no obstacles were placed in their way.<sup>2</sup> One of

1. ibid, p.1.

2. ibid, pp.11-12.

the principal objects of the scheme was the education abroad of students who were to be the nucleus of a reformed English clergy when the Marian reaction came to an end and the work of reformation could be resumed. The young men, it seems, were organized into companies as soon as they arrived on the Continent, while the gentry travelled by households, and the financial side of the project was controlled by business men who had the support of merchants and bankers. Ordinarily the arrival of a group at its destination was expected and appropriate provision was made. Each colony, having secured the permission of the authorities, then settled down to a somewhat circumscribed existence, segregated from its neighbours by language and custom, its members thrown together through lack of adequate accommodation in circumstances which encouraged both incessant quarrels and the breaking down of social barriers.

The very ease with which many of the exiles were able to leave England caused difficulty, for only as protestant confessors expelled on account of their religious convictions could they hope to

secure the good-will and hospitality of the Imperial cities; neither seditious persons nor seditious activities would be tolerated. It was, says Miss Garrett,

...out of this predicament....that the need arose for a legend of persecution and banishment. Hence it was that in all their supplications for shelter, these voluntary exiles became in their own phrase 'die armen vertryb-nen Engellender', and 'poor banished Englishmen they have remained in the sympathy of the world to the present day.....Suddenly confronted with the alternative of flight or re-absorption into the catholic majority, they contrived a 'working fiction' to meet their needs..... Very soon they came....to believe ardently in their own fiction.<sup>1</sup>

The evidence may be studied in Miss Garrett's pages in all its detail; here, only sufficient has been said to indicate the character of the emigration in which Becon took part. No doubt there were several exiles who crossed the sea without any direction and on their own initiative, and it is certain that there were some who, like Becon, could justly claim to have been persecuted and, indeed, banished — for to that virtually amounted the encouragement

1. ibid, p.15.

to leave the country which they had received. But it is clear why the civic authorities in the various cities took great care to ascertain the bona fides of every stranger from England who claimed the privilege of asylum.

A particularly rigorous scrutiny was instituted at Strasbourg, where a very important group eventually assembled — Sir John Cheke, Sir Peter Carew, Sir Thomas Wrothe, Sir Anthony Cooke, Sir Richard Morison, Sandys, Thomas Sampson, Ponet, and the bankers Thomas Heton and John Abell, among others.<sup>1</sup> Peter Martyr and Pierre Alexandre had arrived in the autumn of 1553, and in the spring of the next year they were joined by a number of students and others. How soon Becon reached the city we do not know, but he made a notable addition to the colony which, Miss Garrett conjectures, served as a centre for political propaganda, and had in fact been planned as such by Cecil.<sup>2</sup>

1. ibid, pp.27-28; see the biographies in the Census.

2. ibid, pp.27-29.

It cannot have been merely chance or convenience that led him to Strasbourg; his value as a serviceable propagandist suggests that after his liberation he was directed to make his way thither and to place his talents at the disposal of the cause.

The Strasbourg divines were not long idle, and before many weeks had passed, the products of their summer's labour were being conveyed into England by way of Emden, augmented there by Bale's scurrilous and obscene Declaration of Edmonde Bonners Articles. The arrival of these seditious exports was timed, it would appear, with the object of arming opinion against the anticipated reconciliation with the Roman see, and of influencing the legislative activities of the Parliament which was expected soon to meet. Foxe describes the result:

About the 5th of October, and within a fortnight following, were divers, as well householders as servants and apprentices, apprehended and taken, and committed to sundry prisons, for the having and selling of certain books which were sent into England by the preachers that fled into Germany and other countries; which books nipped a great number so near, that within one fortnight there were little less than threescore imprisoned for this



matter.....<sup>1</sup>

Among these books was a pamphlet entitled The humble and unfained confession of the belefe of certain poore banished men, which was addressed to the Lords and Commons of England.<sup>2</sup> Becon, Sandys, and Sampson may all have collaborated in its production, but in its finished state it bears unmistakably the marks of Ponet's pen:

...the style of it is the style of Ponet. The very turns of phrase and temper of it are his.<sup>3</sup>

But the tracts which found so ready a sale in London doubtless included two from Becon's hand, A comfortable epistle to the afflicted people of God<sup>4</sup> and An humble supplication unto God for the restoring of his holy word unto the Church of England.<sup>5</sup>

1. vi. p.561.

2. STC 5630; see Garrett, Exiles, pp.28-29; 84, 142, 254-255.

3. ibid, p.254.

4. Bib. I, A 39.

5. Bib. I, A 40. Dixon, it appears, thought that perhaps these works, and certainly others like

The first, to which the author added a preface in 1563,<sup>1</sup> was, as he assures us, "not read of the brethren without fruit".<sup>2</sup> In twelve chapters, and beginning, as was customary among the reformers, with an apostolic salutation, it ascribes the present distresses and persecution to unthankfulness for God's past mercies to England, enjoins repentance, faith, good works, prayer and patience, and fortifies the readers by numerous scriptural instances showing that in the time of man's extremity God will act, if only man on his part will turn again to him.

This epistle is in a familiar strain; we have already met its argument in earlier works, and now the prophet is able to point to the fulfilment of

the Displaying of the Popish Mass, were written prior to Becon's flight to the Continent, but internal evidence tells against this; see HCE iv, p.684. C.H.Smyth, Cranmer and the Reformation under Edward VI, p.7, confuses Becon's Humble Supplication with the anonymous Supplication to the Quenes maiesty, which he erroneously attributes to him.

1. "From Cantorbury, October 6"; P iii, p.204.
2. ibid.

his own predictions.<sup>1</sup> But the Supplication strikes a new note — a note, unfortunately, sounded with unwelcome frequency during Becon's latter years. He explains that in his writings during exile and after his return to England

...as the time and manners of men justly required, I have somewhat more sharpened my pen in some places against antichrist and his Babylonical brood, than in my books heretofore made and published.<sup>2</sup>

It might perhaps better be said that he tended to accommodate his style to that of some of the men in whose company he began to find himself, and tasted somewhat of that polluted fount of inspiration whence Bale, Ponet, and their kind had taken such copious draughts. The Supplication, indeed, is less a prayer than a blasphemous harangue addressed to the Almighty:

Thou callest thyself a "jealous God": why then dost thou suffer thy people, thy congregation, thy flock, thine heritage, to be thus seduced and led away from thee.....?

1. cf P i, p.39; P iii, p.12.

2. Preface to folio edition, P i, p.29.

Thou callest thyself a Lord, and thou sayest that thou wilt give thy glory to none other, nor thy praise unto graven images: how cometh it then to pass that thou sufferest thy glory so to decay in the realm of England....? Thou callest thyself a lion and "a consuming fire", and threatenest utter destruction unto thine adversaries: why sufferest thou then these antichrists thus to rise, roar, and rage against the testament of thy most dear Son...?<sup>1</sup>

A most offensive spirit animates this prayer, if such it can be called; we cannot forbear asking, Where is the devout author of the Flower and the Pomander ? The matter of the Supplication, however, is interesting enough to justify larger quotation, both for itself, and because we can thereby extract Becon's own account of the Marian persecutions. As an introduction, one or two characteristic passages from the Comfortable Epistle may be given.

Reiterating the opinion which he recanted in 1543, that to suffer persecution is a note of the true Church, Becon tells how

This cross....was laid upon the true Christians of this our realm...., insomuch that div-

1. P iii, p.226.

ers of our countrymen were most grievously persecuted, most cruelly apprehended, imprisoned, stocked, chained, manacled, brought forth, accused, condemned, burnt into ashes; divers were secretly famished and murdered in prison; divers spoiled of all their goods; divers exiled and banished into strange countries.....<sup>1</sup>

Signs had not been wanting that the destruction of true religion was at hand, as the preachers and the faithful themselves,

...godly considering the corrupt manners and unlucky chances of this realm, did right well .....aforesee and greatly lament..... What shall I speak of that godly and mighty prince Edward, duke of Somerset, which in the time of his protectorship did so banish idolatry out of this our realm, and bring in again God's true religion, that it was wonder so weighty a matter to be brought to pass in so short a time ? Was not the ungentle handling of him, and the unrighteous thrusting him out of office, and afterward the cruel murdering of him, a man, yea, a mirror of true innocency and christian patience, an evident token of God's anger against us ? The sudden taking away of those most goodly and virtuous young imps, the duke of Suffolk and his brother, by the sweating sickness, was it not also a manifest token of God's heavy displeasure toward us ? The death of those two most worthy and godly-learned men, I speak of M. Paulus Fagius, and of D. Martin Bucer, was it not a sure prognostication of some great mishap concerning christian religion to be at hand ? But, as I may

1. Preface, Comfortable Epistle, P iii, p.203.



pass over many other, and at the last come unto that which is most lamentable, and can never be remembered of any true English heart without large tears, I mean the death of our most godly prince and christian king, Edward the VI., that true Josias.....was not the taking away of him (alas for sorrow !) a sure sign and an evident token that some great evil hanged over this realm of England ?<sup>1</sup>

Now contempt of God's blessings had brought its reward:

We abhorred the light of God's word; therefore are we now justly overwhelmed with the darkness of men's trifling traditions and devilish decrees. We lightly esteemed the godly prayers and thanksgivings in our English tongue....therefore are we now fed with Latin service.... We set nought by the ministrations of the holy and blessed communion of the body and blood of Christ: therefore...we have most wicked and abominable masses set up.... We regarded not the godly-learned and fatherly bishops, nor the faithful and virtuous ministers of God's word, which fed us with the pure wheat of Christ's gospel.....therefore, all those men of God being put to silence.... we are compelled daily to hear such anti-christian trumpet-blowers, such cankered comorants, such Caim-like caterpillars, such idle idols, such loitering lordennes, such lecherous lubbers, and such devilish destroyers of christian men's souls, as the ears of a good Christian abhor for to hear, the eyes

1. Comfortable Epistle, P iii, pp.205-206.

to behold, the feet to go unto.<sup>1</sup>

Turning now to the Supplication, and passing over the inevitable account of all that had been wrought by the zeal and diligence of Henry and Edward, we come to Becon's description of Mary's reign. We need not follow him as he enumerates with coarse and unseemly comment every detail of the old rites and ceremonies, now again restored to use.<sup>2</sup> He laments that the English service has gone, and the homilies and the Litany; that Mass is again celebrated where lately the Holy Communion was administered; that baptism and confirmation have recovered their former superstitious accretions; that

1. ibid., P iii, p.207. I have omitted some of the abuse for the sake of brevity and the reader's patience.
2. As a specimen, I give his account of the Sacrament of Baptism: "Unto the sacrament of baptism they put heathenish rites and wicked conjurations. For Baal's priest, before the child can be baptised, bewitcheth the water, shutteth the church-door, conjureth the devil out of the poor young infant, bespueth the child with his vile spittle and stinking slavering, putteth salt in the child's mouth, smeareth it with greasy and unsavoury oil, &c. And without these apish toys they make the people believe that the baptism is nothing worth." P iii, p.231.

the Catechism has been pronounced heretical; and that in

...certain antichristian articles from the queen....a strait commandment is given that children should so be brought up that they might learn to help the priest to say mass...

He complains of the treatment of the married clergy:

...now the wicked papists....have brought the godly and lawful marriage of ministers and their wives unto this point, that it is now counted whoredom.... they, against all right and conscience, against all truth and honesty, do not only most wickedly divorce them, but they also cruelly compel divers of the ministers which are fainthearted, and were, as it seemeth, but timelings, serving rather the time (as the manner of the worldlings is) than marrying in thy fear, to do open penance before the people, and to confess...that their marriage was no marriage, but plain whoredom. And there those filthy dogs, which are returned unto their vomit most wretchedly, couch and kneel down before the people, and desire them to forgive them, and promise that they will never more come in their wives' company, but from henceforth live like good and catholic men, according to the order of their holy priesthood; that is to say, abstain from honourable wedlock, and defile themselves with all kind of whoredom, uncleanness, and dishonesty.

A marginal note exhorts these offenders:

...Repent, ye wicked blasphemers of honourable

marriage, and take your wives again unto you.<sup>1</sup>

He compares Mary with Jezebel, the faithful ministers and godly preachers with the prophets of the Lord, and the priests with those of Baal. The ministers and preachers are

...thrust out of their livings, and deprived of all that they had, insomuch that they, and their poor wives, with their young children, are not only brought to the state of poverty, but also unto extreme beggary, without house or harbour, without meat, drink, and clothe ! Yea, many of them...are compelled to forsake their native country, their parents, their friends, their livings, and to wander abroad in strange realms, leading most sorrowful and comfortless lives....<sup>2</sup>

Moreover, as Becon knew from experience,

...the true preachers of God's word are called seditious persons, troublers of the commonwealth, heretics, schismatics, sacramentaries, despisers of our holy mother church, haters of all laudable ceremonies, breakers of all old ancient customs, and the alone authors of all the evils wherewith the realm of England heretofore hath been, or now is troubled....<sup>3</sup>

1. P iii, p.235.

2. P iii, p.238; cf p.239.

3. P iii, p.240.

Many, indeed, languish in prison,

...as we have at this present for an ensample  
thy faithful and worthy servants Thomas Cran-  
mer, Hugh Latimer, Nicholas Ridley, John Hop-  
per, John Rogers, John Philpott, John Brad-  
forde, Laurence Saunders, with divers others...<sup>1</sup>

For this condition of things Becon holds the  
priests responsible:

They alone be chiefest, and of much estim-  
ation with the queen. They alone ruffle and  
reign. They alone bear the swing in the court.  
They alone have all things going forward as  
they desire. They alone be capped, kneeled,  
and crouched to. They alone have the keys of  
the English kingdom hanging at their girdles.  
Whatsoever they bind and loose, whispering and  
traiterously conspiring among themselves, that  
same is both bound and loosed in the star-  
chamber, in Westminster hall, in the parlia-  
ment house, yea, in the queen's privy chamber,  
and throughout the realm of England. The very  
nobility of England are in a manner brought  
to such slavery, that they dare not displease  
the lessest of these spiteful spiritual limbs  
of antichrist.<sup>2</sup>

The choicest abuse is reserved for "a certain head  
wolf clothed in a bishop's rochet" who can be none

1. P iii, p.244.

2. P iii, p.238.



other than Gardiner. He is described as a "wild boar, successor to Ananias, that white-daubed wall.....",<sup>1</sup> and as

...that great wolf, whose face is like unto the face of a she-bear that is robbed of her young ones, whose eyes continually burn with the unquenchable flames of the deadly cockatrice, whose teeth are like to the venomous toshes of the ramping lion, whose mouth is full of cursed speaking and bitterness, whose tongue speaketh extreme blasphemies against thee and thy holy Anointed, whose lips are full of deadly poison, whose throat is an open sepulchre, whose breath foameth and bloweth out threatening and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, whose heart without ceasing imagineth wickedness, whose hands have a delight to be imbrued with the blood of the saints, whose feet are swift to shed blood, whose whole man, both body and soul, go always up and down musing of mischief. This wolf, O Lord, is so arrogant, haughty, and proud, seeing the government of the whole realm is committed unto him, that he hath cast away all fear of thee.... When such, O Lord, as will not obey their popish and devilish proceedings, are brought before that grievous wolf, they are miserably taunted, mocked, scorned, blasphemed, as thy dearly-beloved Son was in bishop Caiphas' house, and afterward cruelly committed to prison, to the Tower, to the Fleet, to the Marshalseas, to the King's Bench, to the Counters, to Lollards' Tower, to Newgate, &c., where they are kept as sheep in a pinfold appointed to be slain. And as this cruel and bloody wolf dealeth with the poor lambs, even so do the residue of that lecherous litter.<sup>2</sup>

1. P iii, p.228.

2. P iii, p.237.

These, it will not be forgotten, are quotations from a Humble Supplication unto God, and we may well pause to mark the pious author's devotional style. If it wants something of the richness, the colour, and the force (as we may pass over the blasphemy and obscenity) of Bale's best efforts, it will nevertheless be allowed to be a not altogether unworthy imitation of the pungent and scurrilous invective of which his lordship of Ossory was a master. It has, indeed, a character of its own. As a prayer the Supplication is outrageous,<sup>1</sup> and as an account of the conditions and proceedings in England up to the time of its composition it is exaggerated — no doubt for very good reasons. Granted his hasty and often fiery zeal, it does not do Winchester justice. But we miss the main point of the work if we pause to criticize its devotional propriety or its historical accuracy. It was intended in the first place simply to stir up feeling against the Romanist reaction in England, and to excite and encourage the resistance of those who remained there.

1. I have not quoted its worst passages.

It was also composed, we may be sure, with an eye upon Continental opinion; the enormities which it describes would prove the reality of the persecution, and would give the lie to any suspicions which the civic authorities in Germany were inclined to entertain concerning the political character of the migration. It is invaluable as an example of the sort of interpretation which the exiles were placing upon events, and of the propaganda by means of which they were trying from their refuge abroad to influence the course of affairs at home.

This is well illustrated by Becon's attitude to Queen Mary and to the "monstruous regiment of women". He was not the only one to set John Knox's trumpet to his lips, for Ponet<sup>1</sup> and Christopher Goodman,<sup>2</sup> his companions in exile at Strasbourg, blew a note even stronger and more sustained, while Bartholomew Traheron<sup>3</sup> from Frankfort gave no

1. A shorte Treatise of politike pouuer....
2. How superior powers ought to be obeyd of their subiects.....
3. A Warning to England to repente.....

uncertain sound.<sup>1</sup> Of their arguments — that Mary was a woman, and born therefore not to rule but to be in subjection to men; that she was illegitimate, and therefore a usurper of the throne; and that she was tyrannical, and ought therefore to be deposed — Becon stresses chiefly the first:

...in the stead of that virtuous prince [Edward] thou hast set to rule over us a woman, whom nature hath formed to be in subjection unto man, and whom thou by thy holy apostle commandest to keep silence, and not to speak in the congregation. Ah, Lord ! to take away the empire from a man, and to give it unto a woman, seemeth to be an evident token of thine anger toward us Englishmen. For by the prophet thou, being displeased with thy people, threatenest to set women to rule over them, as people unworthy to have lawful, natural, and meet governors to reign over them. And verily, though we find that women sometime bare rule among thy people, yet do we read that such as ruled and were queens were for the most part wicked, ungodly, superstitious, and given to idolatry and to all filthy abominations; as we may see in the histories of queen Jesabel, queen Athalia, queen Herodias, and such like. Ah, Lord God ! we dare not take upon us to judge any creature, for unto thee alone are the secrets of all hearts known; but of this are we sure, that since she ruled (whether of her own disposition, or of the provocation of a certain wild boar, successor to Ananias,

1. For a discussion of this aspect of Puritan politics, see Maitland, Essays on subjects connected with the Reformation in England, VII, pp.126-149.

that white-daubed wall, we know not), thy vineyard is utterly rooted up and laid waste, thy true religion is banished, and popish superstition hath prevailed, yea, and that under the colour of the catholic church and the old ancient faith.... For besides the giving of the kingdom unto the rule of a woman, O Lord, we most humbly beseech thee to consider what outrageous floods of most grievous enormities have brast in and overflowed the realm of England, unto the utter subversion of the same, except thy merciful goodness doth shortly help.<sup>1</sup>

This is the only passage of its kind in the Supplication, though its argument is supported by implication in each of the twenty-two comparisons between the times of queen Mary and those of queen Jezebel, which occupy almost half the work, and insinuate that as their lives and acts, so must their ends agree.

Becon is silent upon a subject to which both Goodman and Ponet address themselves at length — that of government, and particularly,

...not only the doctrine that the people have a right to resist the ruler whenever in their opinion he commands what is wrong, but that

1. P iii, pp. 227-228.



they are the source of power, and are answerable to God, not only for their delegation of it to fit persons as rulers, but for the use which they allow to be made of it by those to whom they have delegated it; and from whom on the misuse of that power they are bound to resume it.....<sup>1</sup>

But in the Comfortable Epistle he encourages a practice apparently common in the secret assemblies which continued to meet in England and to use the Prayer Book service — that of praying, either for the queen's conversion from idolatry, or for her speedy decease.<sup>2</sup> Recounting from the book of Esther how the king Ahasuerus had been turned from his purpose of persecuting the Jews in his dominions, and had given them leave to exercise vengeance upon any who should trouble them, he adds a marginal note which is certainly a veiled incitement to pray for Mary's conversion or death:

May not God thus work in the queen's heart

1. Maitland, op.cit., pp.111-112; see the whole of Essay VI.
2. See Dixon, HCE, iv, pp.287 and 298-299; 1 Phil. and Mary 9 enacted against these schismatical assemblies and their practices.

for his faithful servants in time to come ?  
or else, taking her away, set up such one to  
reign as may favour his people ?<sup>1</sup>

But he appears to have left to the more competent  
pens of his fellow exiles the production of the  
political propaganda which in the autumn of 1554  
began to flood into England.

### III

Passing now northward from the Argentine city,  
we must glance at the fortunes and contentions of  
the refugees, but little less distinguished than  
those of Strasbourg, who had settled in the Imper-  
ial city of Frankfort.<sup>2</sup>

On 27 June certain Englishmen, and prominent  
among them William Whittingham, arrived in the

1. P iii, p.214.

2. For full accounts, see Troubles; also an edit-  
ion by E.Arber, 1908, with notes and many add-  
itions; also Dixon, HCE, iv, pp.688-699, and  
J.H.Colligan, William Whittingham of Chester.

city. Refusing to amalgamate with the French congregation, they were accorded permission by the authorities to use the French church alternately with the Frenchmen. Being allowed some latitude in the matter of ceremonies, they decided to adopt the English Prayer Book, making modifications appropriate to the Reformed or Calvinistic type of church which Whittingham and others seem to have desired to establish.

...this by generall consente was concluded that the answeringe allowde after the Minister shulde not be vsed, the letanye, surplice, and many other thinges also omitted..... It was father agreed vppon, that the Minister (in place off the Englishe Confession shulde vse an other, bothe off more effecte, and also framed accordinge to the state and time. And the same ended, the people to singe a psalme in meetre in a plaine tune..... that don, the minister to praye for the assistance off gods holie spirite and so to proceade to the sermon. After the sermon, a generall praier for all estates and for oure countrie of Englande was also deuised, at thende off whiche praier, was ioined the lords praier and a rehersall of tharticles off oure belieff, which ended the people to singe and other psalme as afore. Then the minister pronouncinge this blessinge. The peace off god, &c. or some other off like effecte, the people to departe.

And as touchinge the ministration off the Sacraments sundrie things were also by common consente omitted, as superstitious and

superfluous.<sup>1</sup>

A circular letter was then sent on 2 August to the colonies at Strasbourg, Zurich, Duisburg, and Emden, inviting them to come to Frankfort and take advantage of the godly order there established. This letter had a varied reception. The "lerned men off Strausbrough" interpreted it as a request for someone to take charge at Frankfort, and suggested one of the three bishops, Ponet, Scory, or Bale, or Dr. Cox, the late Dean of Christchurch.<sup>2</sup> They were soon told of their misapprehension, however:

...the congregation wrote not particularly for anie certeine nomber, but generally wishinge all mens presence, nether did they require to haue anye superintendent to take the chieff charge and gouvernement, for the choise and election thereof (yff suche a one had bene necessary) ought to haue byn reserued to the congregation, whiche fully determined at that tyme to haue the church gouerned by 2. or 3. graue, godly and lerned Ministers off like authoritie, as is accustomed in the beste reformed churches.<sup>3</sup>

1. Troubles, pp.VI-VII.

2. ibid, p.XIII.

3. ibid, p.XIIII.

The students of Zurich wrote on 13 October that they were anxious not to have their studies interrupted, but that

...yff...our beinge there is so needfull as ye haue alreadie signified, and that we maie altogether serue and praise god as freely and as vprightly, (wheroff pryuate letters receiued lately from Frankf. make vs muche to dowte) as the order laste taken in the church of England permittethe and prescribeth (for we are fully determined to admitt and vse no other) then, abowte easter nexte (for afore we cannot) god prosperinge vs, and no iuste cause or occasion to the contrary growinge in the meane time wherby our intente maie be defeated with one consente we agree to ioine oure selues vnto yow....<sup>1</sup>

It is clear that those who supported episcopacy and the second Edwardine Prayer Book were already somewhat apprehensive as to the significance of the developments at Frankfort. The exiles there, in pursuance of the intention expressed in their second letter to Strasbourg, had already elected and invited three ministers, Knox of Geneva, Haddon of Strasbourg, and Lever of Zurich, to undertake the oversight of the congregation; of whom Haddon de-

1. ibid, p.XVI.



desired to be excused, while Knox and Lever deferred their coming. Meanwhile David Whitehead arrived on 24 October, and at the request of the congregation took charge for a time, and preached upon the Epistle to the Romans. He was, says Miss Garrett,

...no friend to Whittingham, and there is something suspicious about his timely arrival.... at the height of the liturgical controversy, and only ten days before the appearance of Richard Chambers on his embassy from Zurich. It looks very much as if he had been sent as an advance agent in the combined effort of Strasbourg and Zurich to supplant Whittingham's influence at Frankfort and raise up a formidable opposition to John Knox.<sup>1</sup>

Chambers entered the city about 4 November, bearing a letter from Zurich, to which, as to Strasbourg, Frankfort had written a second time; it reaffirmed the original intention of the exiles there:

...[we] will not deny to remoue from hence vnto yow, so that yow charged off conscience do constantly affirme, that ye haue so great neede off vs as by letters was signified, and certainly assure vs that we with yow maie and

1. Exiles, p.326.

shall vse the same order off service concerninge religion whiche was in Englande laste set forthe by kinge Edward.<sup>1</sup>

Chambers, they continued, came from them with full powers to investigate the Frankfort proposals, and to make undertakings, if necessary, in their name. But after discussion he was unable to secure the assurance regarding the use of the Prayer Book for which Zurich pressed, and returned there bearing another missive dated 15 November.

On 28 November Chambers again arrived at Frankfort on a diplomatic mission, bearing this time a communication from Strasbourg, whence he had come in company with Edmund Grindal. The Argentine exiles wrote:

...we haue thought it expedient to sende ouer vnto yow, oure beloued brethern the bringers hereoff to trauell withe the magistrats and you concerninge the premisses..... And yff they obtaine that whiche we truste will not be denied at no hands: then we intend (God willinge) to be with yow the firste off February next, there to helpe to set in order and stablishe that churche accordingly. And

1. Troubles, p.XVIII; see pp.XVII-XXII.

so longe altogether to remaine with yow as shall be necessary.....

And we dowte not but that our brethern off Zurick, Emden Duesbrough &c. will do the same accordingly....<sup>1</sup>

Grindal explained that the occasion of their coming was

...chieflye for the establishinge of the booke off England not that they mente...to haue it so strictly obserued but that suche ceremonies and thinges whiche the countrie coulde not beare, might well be omitted, so that they might haue the substance and effecte theroff.<sup>2</sup>

Thereupon ensued a discussion between the envoys, and Whittingham and Knox, the latter having lately arrived. It proved unproductive, and Chambers and Grindal returned bearing a letter in which the Frankfort congregation declined to consider the proposals, and commented:

...yff the not full vsinge off the booke cause the godly to dowte in that truthe wherin before they were perswaded, and to staye theyr comm-

1. ibid, p.XXIII.

2. ibid, pp.XXIII-XXIV.

inge hither, accordinge as they purposed:  
 either it signifieth that they were verye  
 slenderly taught whiche for breach off a Cere-  
 monie will refuse suche a singuler benefit,  
 or ells that yow haue harde them misreported  
 by some false brethern, who, to hinder this  
 worthie enterprise, spare not to sowe in euerie  
 place, store off suche poore reasons.<sup>1</sup>

A reply from Strasbourg closed the matter for the  
 time being:

...for so muche as your opinion is that the  
 tyme dothe not presently serue to moue the  
 magistrats in those requests the obteneinge  
 wheroff was the principall cause of our send-  
 ing vnto yow, we cannot at this present con-  
 descend vppon anie generall meetinge, at anie  
 certeine tyme, ether to remaine with yow or  
 otherwise. And therefore, iff yow shall certein-  
 ly perceaua a time conuenient, that the Magis-  
 trats may be traueled withe all aswell for the  
 good and quiete habitation of the commers, and  
 especially Students, as also a seuerall church-  
 e, and to knowe whither the exercise off the booke  
 shall be vsed, suche we meane as no reasonable  
 mā shall iustly reprove, and that the certein-  
 tie off theis matters maie be knowen at the  
 magistrats hands: then....we will father con-  
 sulte what is to be done on oure partye.....<sup>2</sup>

Left to themselves, the exiles in Frankfort  
 now proceeded to form a 'church', and to draw up a

1. ibid, p.XXV.

2. ibid, pp.XXVI-XXVII. The letter is dated 13 Dec-  
 ember.

revised form of worship. Knox asked to be allowed to administer the Sacrament according to his own conscience; if that were not granted, to be excused and permitted to devote himself to preaching while another ministered at the Supper; or else, to be discharged. While this was in debate, Thomas Lever arrived from Geneva, and to compose the difference compiled a new order which, however, met with no approval, being "not altogether suche as was fit for a right reformed church". Then, to break the deadlock, Knox, Whittingham, and others sent a Latin draft of the Prayer Book to Calvin for his opinion. He replied on 20 January 1554-5:<sup>1</sup>

In the liturgie off Englande, I se that there were manye tollerable foolishe thinges, by theis wordes I meane, that there was not that purity whiche was to be desired. Theis vices, thoughe they coulde not at the firste daie be amended, yet, seinge there was no manifeste impetie [impiety], they were for a season to be tollerated;

he counselled patience with the weak brethren, whom in turn he warned not to hinder the edificat-

1. See Opera, viii, Epistolae, p.98.



ion of the church by their froward foolishness.<sup>1</sup>  
 After the reading of this letter, many were not  
 "so stowte to maintaine all the partes off the  
 boke off England". Finally, after more wrangling,  
 at the end of which Knox showed himself unexpected-  
 ly magnanimous, an order was agreed upon, and was  
 brought into use on 6 February. It was determined  
 that it should continue in force until the end of  
 the following April, and that any dispute should  
 be referred to the arbitration of Calvin, Musculus,  
 Martyr, Bullinger, and Viret. Then, to quote from  
 the Troubles,

This daie was ioyfull. Thanckes were geuē  
 to God, brotherly reconciliation folowed,  
 great familiaritie vsed, the former grudges  
 seemed to be forgotten. Yea the holie commun-  
 ion was vppon this happie agreement, also min-  
 istred. And this frindshipp continued till the  
 13. off March folowinge....<sup>2</sup>

— of which more shortly.

It is interesting to note that the Frankfort

1. Troubles, p. XXXV.

2. p. XXXVIII.

letter of 3 December — the one conveyed to Strasbourg by Chambers and Grindal — was subscribed, among others, by George Whetnall and his son Thomas. The former will be remembered as one of the gentry who had befriended Becon during his Kentish retirement, and to whom the Nosegay was dedicated. Neither of the Strasbourg letters — those dated 23 November and 13 December — however, bears Becon's among the sixteen signatures, yet he must have known what was going on, and subsequent events prove that he supported the Strasbourg policy. Another missing name is Ponet's, despite there being good reason to suspect that he was responsible for directing the resistance to the Frankfort innovations. This latter omission is significant, for the dispute between the two colonies was not only liturgical; it seems that Ponet, as senior bishop in exile, may have attempted to bring episcopal pressure to bear upon Whittingham and his friends, partly from a sense of responsibility, partly out of animosity towards Whittingham. How far the latter was acting on the authority of Cecil and the rest at home when he proposed in the Frankfort circular

the unification of the various English colonies, and how far the idea was inspired by personal ambition, it is impossible to say.<sup>1</sup> But it may well have been felt that the success of the Strasbourg counter-moves might be imperilled if they were too obviously connected with the name of the late Bishop of Winchester, with its suggestion of episcopal coercion and personal antagonism. Hence Ponet refrained from adding his signature to those of his companions.

Becon, however, was not, so far as we know, in any way persona ingrata to the men of Frankfort, nor estranged from his old friend and benefactor George Whetnall, who could have reassured them. His views on kneeling at the Communion would doubtless be known, but that controversy was not renewed among the exiles,<sup>2</sup> and there is, as we have noted, good reason to assume his general agreement with the others in Strasbourg. Why then did he not take

1. See Garrett, Exiles, pp.135, 256, and 329 for a larger discussion of this point.

2. But see Orig.Let., i, pp.170-171, Sampson to Calvin.

that share in the negotiations with Frankfort which his reputation, and his subsequent position there, would lead us to expect ?

From the Strasbourg letters there is another interesting omission — the name of Richard Cox, who surpassed all the others in liturgiological experience, having taken a great part in the preparation of the 1548 Order of Communion, the 1550 Ordinal, and the 1549 and 1552 Prayer Books. He arrived in Strasbourg in June 1544 or thereabout, having travelled from England via Antwerp and (so it is surmised) Duisburg.<sup>1</sup> Yet his name does not appear in the correspondence, nor is it to be found either in the Strasbourg protocols or in the list of English refugees furnished by the city magistrates to the Duke of Württemberg on 28 December.<sup>2</sup> Becon's name, too, is omitted from the latter,<sup>3</sup> whence it would appear that both he and Cox were absent from Strasbourg during the last months of

1. Foxe, viii, pp.597-598, 792.

2. Garrett, Exiles, p.134.

3. ibid, p.85.

the year — for it is unlikely that Becon, at any rate, would have left before the end of September, being occupied until then, with Ponet and others, in the production of subversive pamphlets.

What took Becon and Cox away from Strasbourg that winter ? Many explanations might be hazarded, but I would suggest that Cox had been despatched on missions supplementary to that of Chambers and Grindal; that he was occupied in visiting the other colonies, and particularly Zurich, in order to keep them informed, to discuss the situation as it developed, and to plan action in the event of the Frankfort negotiations breaking down. For such a task Cox would be eminently fitted, but his intervention in the consultations themselves might have been viewed by Frankfort with no little apprehension. For the time being, therefore, he was held in reserve. As to Becon, there are two possibilities: the position he later occupied prompts the conjecture that he was associated with Cox in at least some of the journeys which we have supposed the latter undertook at this time; he may, however, have been away visiting his family at Marburg for



part of the winter.<sup>1</sup>

Some hint of Cox's work behind the scenes is perhaps to be seen in the fact that he had not been long in Frankfort before he called Horne to his assistance from Zurich;<sup>2</sup> the future Bishop of Winchester may well have been waiting in readiness for a summons. Everything points to a careful organization of Strasbourg's campaign, probably under the direction of Ponet, at the details of which we can now only guess. Of the issue of the campaign, however, the Troubles contains practically the full story.

The negotiations between the Prayer Book and the Calvinizing congregations having proved futile, Strasbourg determined upon direct and forceful intervention. On 13 March 1554-5 Dr. Cox, arrogant and domineering, arrived in Frankfort with a party which doubtless included Thomas Becon. Immediately they proceeded to their appointed task of reducing

1. See below, p.356

2. Garrett, Exiles, p.189.

the church to order. First, they began to answer aloud after the minister, and, being admonished for this by the "Seniors" of the congregation, declared that

...they woulde do as they had donne in Eng-  
lande, and that they woulde haue the face off  
an English church.<sup>1</sup>

Next, they went a step further:

...the sundaie folowing, one off [Cox's] com-  
pany<sup>2</sup> withowt the consent and knowledg off  
the congregation gate vpp suddainly into the  
pulpit, redd the lettany, and D.Cox withe his  
companie answered alowde, wherby the deter-  
mination off the church was broken.<sup>3</sup>

1. Troubles, p.XXXVIII.
2. Jewel, according to Colligan, op.cit., p,52; Knox himself says: "...not consulting with any man that was in office, to the great grief and trouble of the Congregation, Mr Lever brought in one to preach who had been at Masse in England, and had subscribed to blasphemous Articles, who read the Litanie in the pulpit, the people answering....", Works of John Knox (ed. Laing), iv, p.43. Jewel would answer to this discription; later also he ascended the pulpit, this time to make his public confession, see his Works (PS), iv, p.xii.
3. Troubles, p.XXXVIII.

Knox was not slow to meet the challenge; it was his turn to preach that afternoon, and having in his exposition of Genesis appropriately come "to Noah as he laie open in his tente", he delivered an outspoken sermon to the effect that

...as diuers thinges....ought to be kepte secret, euenso suche thinges as end to the dishonor off God and disquieting of his churche ought to be disclosed and openly reproofed.

The account of this discourse in the Troubles<sup>1</sup> continues:

...therupon he shewed, howe that after longe trouble and contention amonge them, a godly agremente was made, and howe that the same, that daie was vngodly broken, whiche thinge, became not (as he saied) the proudest off them all to haue attēpted, alleadginge furthermore that like as by the worde off God we muste seeke oure warrant for the establishing off religion, and withowt that to thruste nothinge into anie Christian congregation: so for as muche as in the Englishe booke were thinges bothe superstitious, vnpure, and vnperfect (which he offred to proue before all men) he would not consent that off that churche it shulde be recieued, and that in case men woulde go abowte to burthen that free congregation therwith, so ofte as he shulde come in that place (the texte offringe occasion) he woulde not faile to speak againste it.

1. See also Knox's account, Works, iv, pp.43-44.

He father affirmed that amonge manye thinges whiche prouoked godds anger againste Englāde, slacknes to reforme religion (when tyme and place was graunted) was one.... And where some men ashamed not to saie, that there was no let or stopp in Englande, but that Religion might be, and was already brought to perfection, he proued the contrary, by the wante of discipline. Also by the troubles which maister Hooper Sustained, for the Rochet and such like, in the booke commanded and allowed.

And for that one man was permitted to haue 3. 4. or 5. benefices to the great slaunder off the gospell and defraudinge off the flock off Christe off their liuely foode and sustenance.<sup>1</sup>

This sermon greatly incensed the Coxians, who "verye sharplie charged, and reprobued" the preacher as soon as he had descended from the pulpit; his observations upon pluralism may have particularly offended some in his audience. The same evening the congregation assembled, and Lever, the pastor at Frankfort, joined with Cox in accusing Knox, who for the shortness of the time was suffered to say little; the following Tuesday, however, was appointed for a disputation upon the whole matter.<sup>2</sup>

1. Troubles, pp. XXXVIII-XXXIX.

2. Knox, Works, iv, p. 45.

When the church met, Cox began by requesting for his party membership of the congregation and votes in the deliberations. The rest withstood the admission of the newcomers, saying that the matter in dispute ought first to be decided, following which they should, like the others, be required to subscribe to the discipline of Frankfort; further, it was greatly suspected that some of the Coxians had been at Mass and had signed wicked articles.<sup>1</sup> Knox, however, entreated that those from Strasbourg should be given votes, and when this was agreed, they found themselves in a majority. Dr. Cox forthwith forbade Knox "to meddle anye more in that congregation".

Whittingham thereupon lost no time in approaching Johann à Glauberg, one of the magistrates who had befriended the exiles, and acquainting him with the situation. Glauberg immediately ordered all preaching to be suspended for that day,<sup>2</sup> and asked

1. Again the allusion is to Jewel; see Whittingham's letter to Calvin, Troubles, p. XLVIII.

2. Wednesday, 20 March.



Valerand Poullain, the French minister, to see to the appointment of two from each side to discuss the matter fully. Cox and Lever accordingly spent two days in Poullain's house arguing with Knox and Whittingham, the Frenchman taking minutes of the debate. On the third day, however, the meetings broke up. Knox describes how the session ended:

...when the order of Mattins, to begin always with "Domine labia", "Deus in adjutorium", et "Deum laudamus", and other prescript words, not read in the Scripture, was called an Order borrowed of the Papists and Papistical; then began the tragedie, and our consultation ended. Who was most blame-worthy, God shall judge; and if I spake fervently, to God was I fervent.<sup>1</sup>

The congregation then submitted the matter to the arbitration of the magistrates in a Latin Supplication presented to Glauberg, wherein an account was given of the course of events from the arrival

1. Knox, Works, iv, p.46. He seems to have lost his temper when Cox insisted on the retention of the Breviary versicles and responses; the latter's words were "ego volo habere", and knowing the speaker we can imagine how they were spoken.

of the exiles to the intrusion of the Coxians. The conclusion is interesting, for it reveals the principal concern of Whittingham and his friends. After explaining the case of Hooper and the controversy over the vestments, the document continues:

But wherfore speake yow off theis thinges will yow saie, that apperteneth nothinge to vs? yes verely, we thinke it touchethe yow verie moche, for yff thies men armed by your authoritie shall do what they liste, this euill shalbe in time established by yow and neuer be redressed, nether shall there for euer be anie ende of this controuersie in Englande. But yff it woulde please your honorable authoritie to decree this moderation between vs, that this whole matter may be referred to the iudgements of the fiue aboue named<sup>1</sup> not we alone that are here present, but oure whole posteritie, yea oure whole englishe nation, and all good men, to the perpetuall memorie off your names, shalbe bownde vnto yow for this great benefit.<sup>2</sup>

Neither side, it is clear, regarded the controversy simply as a wrangle between two small groups of refugees concerning the ordering of the worship of the English church in Frankfort. They knew that

1. i.e., Calvin, Musculus, Martyr, Bullinger and Viret; see above, p.324.

2. Troubles, pp.XLII-XLIII.

when the tyranny was overpast they would return home to continue their interrupted work, and they were only too well aware that upon the issue of the contest in which they were now engaged might depend the character of the Church of England of the future. Nor did events prove them wrong, for the troubles begun at Frankfort were not brought to an end until more than a century had elapsed.

The magistrates, through Glauberg, reminded the exiles that the privilege of residence had been granted on the understanding that they agreed with the French church in doctrine and ceremonies; which he now ordered them to do — otherwise the door of the church would be shut against them, and they would be required to leave the city. He asked for a reply there and then, and Cox informed the congregation, "I haue....redd the frenche order and do thinke it to be bothe good and godly in all pointes"; therefore he recommended that the magistrates requirements be obeyed. All gave their consent, and Glauberg retired satisfied, having "moste iently and louinglie" promised a continuance of his favour towards them. At the next meeting of the

congregation the French order was used.

Colligan describes Cox's yielding to the magistrates as "inexplicable",<sup>1</sup> and so it would be, but for subsequent events; from them, however, it seems clear that his consenting to the French order was simply a device to avoid the dismissal of the English from the city, and to gain time. He now entered the final stage of his campaign. Canvassing the sympathy and support of Dr. Adolphus Glauberg, nephew to the senator, he proceeded at the same time to launch another attack upon Knox. In consultation with Bale, Richard Turner, Jewel and others, he arranged for two of his party, Edward Isaack and Henry Parry, to draw the attention of the magistrates to eight treasonable passages in Knox's book, A faythfull admonition...vnto the professours of Gods truthe in England. To these was added a passage from a sermon preached by Knox at Amersham on 16 July 1553, in which he spoke against the Emperor.<sup>2</sup> Immediately the magistrates sent for Whitting-

1. op.cit., p.55.

2. See Knox, Works,<sup>iv</sup> pp.47-48.

ham and enquired closely into Knox's character; they also requested a Latin translation of the passages in question and, this being furnished, after some deliberation inhibited the accused from preaching. The next day, as Knox entered the church to hear the sermon, the Coxians arose in a body and departed, some of them protesting vehemently that they could not remain there so long as he was present. Meanwhile the magistrates had reached a conclusion and, sending for Whittingham and William Williams, told them to advise Knox to leave the city; otherwise, they said, they would have no alternative but to hand him over to the Emperor, who was then sitting with his Council at Augsburg. Knox did not delay his going, but departed from Frankfurt on 26 March, having the previous evening made

...a moste comfortable sermon at his lodginge to 50. persons or there abowte, then present, which sermō was of the deathe and resurrection off Christe, and of the vnspeakable ioyes whiche were prepared for Goddes electe, whiche in this liffe suffre trouble and persecution for the testimonie off his blessed name.<sup>1</sup>

1. Troubles, p. XLV.



The same day Whittingham was charged to take note that the magistrates had permitted the use of the Prayer Book, and on the day following the charge was repeated; nor were those who dissented to be allowed to join themselves to any other congregation in the city. Thereupon certain of the exiles appealed to Glauberg, but without avail; the magistrates now obviously regarded the whole matter as closed.

On 28 March Cox assembled all the clergy among the refugees, and proposed the election of officers for the newly constituted church. Goodman suggested that they ought first to agree upon some "perfect and godly" order, whereupon he was told that

...for the order, it was already determined,  
and other order then the booke off Englande  
they shulde not haue....;

his further plea, that the laity be also asked to take part in the election, was ignored.<sup>1</sup> The meeting then elected a Pastor,<sup>2</sup> two Ministers, four

1. Troubles, p. XLVII.

2. The choice of this title rather than Bishop may indicate some concession to Whittingham and his party.

Seniors, and two Deacons, the first office being filled by David Whitehead.

In all these proceedings we hear nothing of Thomas Becon, but there can be no doubt at all that he took an active part in them in support of Cox. In the second of the two letters written to Calvin by the now dominant party in Frankfort he signs as "Minister of the Word of God", and it is probable that he was one of the two Ministers or Preachers<sup>1</sup> elected at the meeting on 28 March; certainly it would be a suitable and congenial office. His name is also fourth among the signatures to the first letter to Calvin, dated 5 April,<sup>2</sup> wherein the Prayer Book party gave their version of the events of the preceeding month, suspecting that a prejudiced account might have reached Geneva.

Calvin's reply, sent on 31 May, was temperate but firm. He advised both sides to cultivate a con-

1. As they are called in the first letter to Calvin, Orig.Let., ii, p.754.

2. ibid, Letter CCCLVII.

ciliatory spirit, and expressed his regret that so much contention had arisen on account of superstitious trifles such as Lights and Crossings. He had obviously not appreciated the real significance to English churchmen of the troubles at Frankfort, which went very much deeper than matters of ceremonial and the like, but with one remark there can be no disagreement:

...this one thinge I cannot keepe secret, that Maister Knox was in my iudgemen[t] nether godly nor brotherly dealt withall....<sup>1</sup>

Whittingham and his party were moved by this letter to write on 27 August to the Pastor, Ministers, and congregation, announcing their intention to depart, and asking that their differences might be submitted to arbitration, so that they might know where the fault lay. Three days later both parties met, and the request for an arbitration was refused. On Saturday 31 August Whittingham was asked the cause of his party's departure, and he

1. Troubles, pp.LII-LIII. Calvin, Opera, viii, Epistolae, p.98.

gave seven reasons, stating that if arbitration were allowed, they should hear more — whereupon

...certaine warme wordes passed to and fro from the one to the other, and so in some heate [Whittingham] departed.<sup>1</sup>

Not many days after, he and his friends left, some for Basle and some for Geneva.

This period of the Frankfort troubles closes with the second letter to Calvin, dated 20 September and signed by Whitehead (Pastor), Cox, Becon (Minister of the Word of God), Alvey, Parry, Traheron, and Cottisford, in that order. It was a missive sharp and curt, not to say pugnacious, in tone, bearing plainly the marks of Cox's hand. While professing its authors' veneration and love for the Reformer, it dealt roundly with his letter of 31 May. That letter, they said,

...was to [Whittingham and his party] like the club of Hercules, by which they easily believed that they could beat down all their opponents....

1. Troubles, p.LIX.

while it was also

...not a little annoying to us, inasmuch as it seems to brand us and bring us in guilty of such great offences.

He seemed to appear to certain persons a fit object upon which to practice mischievous deceptions, yet they hoped that he had another ear in reserve for their own account; "Receive, therefore, these few remarks", they said, "in answer to your letter".<sup>1</sup>

It is complained that

..."we are too precise in enforcing the English ceremonies, and unreasonably partial to our own country". These, indeed, we pertinaciously retain, as knowing them to be very godly: this, however, has never been done by us in a precise manner; for we have abandoned some of them for the sake of your friends.... These...are altogether a disgrace to their country.....

You "heard the reasons which would not allow us to depart from the received form". You heard them, indeed, but not from us, and probably not all of them. And, indeed, we have very little doubt but that you would easily refute them: but we are confident that the best reasons of our conduct will stand good before the judgement-seat of God. You say that "it offended you that there was no concession or relaxation made to them on our

1. Orig.Let., ii, p.756.



parts". And you might justly have been offended, had no concession been made. But as this is a barefaced and impudent falsehood of their, you can judge for yourself in what light they must have regarded you. You object to us "lights and crosses". As for lights, we never had any; and with respect to crosses, if we ever made use of them, these friends of yours have not imposed upon you.... Our ceremonies are very few, and all of them of no little use towards the advancement of godliness. But it is no wonder that our ceremonies appear redundant, and even burdensome, to those persons who exclaim against the public reading of the word of God as an irksome and unprofitable form.<sup>1</sup> ....you are right in restraining yourself; or you would otherwise, as the mountebanks do, fight to no purpose against things which have no existence.<sup>2</sup>

Passing over the letter's rather unconvincing treatment of the exclusion of the laity from the election of ministers,<sup>3</sup> we come to its justification of the treatment of Knox. There were, said the writers,

1. In the order drawn up by Whittingham in July 1554 no provision was made for the reading of the scriptures, Troubles, pp.VI-VII.
2. Orig.Let., ii, pp.756-758.
3. The election may, of course, have been subject to lay ratification; this we do not know, as we have only the word of the author of the Troubles, whose bias is in favour of Whittingham's party. The Frankfort exiles tended from the first to emphasize the importance of the lay element.

...certain parties in our church, who, instructed by long practice and experience, were able easily to foresee and conceive beforehand in their minds the evils that were either already impending over our church, or might happen to it in future. These persons understood that Knox had published a certain book, which they perceived would supply their enemies with just ground for overturning the whole church. For there were interspersed in this publication atrocious and horrible calumnies against the queen of England, whom Knox called at one time the wicked Mary, at another time a monster. And he exasperated king Philip also by language not much less violent. When these men had read this infamous libel, attached as they are to true religion and to our church, they considered it neither profitable nor safe to ourselves that Knox should be received with favour by our church.<sup>1</sup>

This reads convincingly until we recall that Ponet, probably the instigator of the opposition to Frankfurt, had published libels equally infamous and seditious; that Strasbourg, whence the opposition emanated, was a centre of subversive propaganda; and that one of Cox's own party, Becon, was no less guilty than Knox. Neither he nor Ponet had quite the coarse virulence of the author of The first blast of the trumpet, but they, no less than he,

1. Orig.Let., ii, p.760.

were disseminators of calumniating literature.

Although the writers of the letter assure Calvin that

...that outrageous pamphlet of Knox's added much oil to the flame of persecution in England. For before the publication of that book, not one of our brethren had suffered death: but as soon as it came forth, we doubt not but that you are well aware of the number of excellent men who have perished in the flames; to say nothing of how many other godly men besides have been exposed to the risk of all their property, and even life itself, upon the sole ground of either having had this book in their possession, or having read it.....<sup>1</sup>

yet Ponet, Goodman, Becon, and others were responsible for these persecutions no less than John Knox. Bullinger had written to John Banks at Strasbourg warning him how injurious to many individuals might be the publication of the last papers of Lady Jane Grey, and Banks, in reply, says:

I now....perceive that our adversaries in England are most mightily disturbed by certain pamphlets, and that they are endeavouring to exclude us from the liberality of those from whom we were expecting the necessary means of

1. Orig.Let., ii, p.761.

subsistence.... The godly men, by whom we have hitherto been aided and supported, are either all of them cast into prison on our account, or....are....carefully watched by the papists.....<sup>1</sup>

It is clear that the literature to which this letter refers emanated from Strasbourg. In any case, nothing that Cox or another could say in disparagement and condemnation of Knox suffices to exculpate Becon and the rest of their share in fanning the flames of persecution in England — though that was not their intention, and their propaganda was reduced and moderated when its effect was seen.

This second letter from the Prayer Book party to Calvin has additional interest for us, since it indicates plainly that Becon had thrown in his lot with the moderate element in the English Reformation, and was a staunch upholder of the Order of 1552. His position of Minister or preacher in the church at Frankfort is evidence that he was regarded as a reliable supporter of the policy sponsored by the exiles of Strasbourg and by many from Zurich, while as a former chaplain of Archbishop Cranmer

1. Orig.Let., i, pp.306-307.

there can be no doubt that he possessed a certain prestige in the eyes of those who stood for the maintenance of the Primate's principles and the furtherance of his work. It is the more surprising, therefore, that we have no record of Becon's ministry in Frankfort, and that his name should not once appear in the narrative of the Troubles. It is highly probable that he was a member of the committee which produced the revision of the 1552 Prayer Book soon after the Coxians had secured an ascendancy in the church, and he must have taken a full part in the deliberations and disputes during the crisis which led to the expulsion of Knox. Yet he is never mentioned — and this, in view of his obvious prominence, is remarkable, when other names less eminent occur again and again. The omission may be due simply to coincidence; or Becon may have confined himself to non-controversial preaching, taking no public part in the disputes. But might it not be that when the account of the troubles came to be written, twenty years after, Becon's name was suppressed? He had already shown a preference for sitting at the reception of the Sacra-



ment, and subsequently, in the New Catechism, he made it clear that he regarded kneeling as a gesture unsuited to the times. Later on, at a memorable session of Convocation, he joined with others in demanding the abolition of certain ceremonies and usages, and the adoption of various disciplinary measures. After that, he was involved in the troubles over vestments. His attitude in these matters, and the character of much of his writing, no doubt disposed the Puritan party to regard him as one who had advocated the principles for which they stood, and he has generally been classed as a Puritan by historians and biographers — due, it seems to me, to a misunderstanding of his position. But it is not unlikely that when the events at Frankfort came to be narrated, the author, desirous of claiming Becon as a supporter of the Puritan cause, felt it undesirable that he should be mentioned among the adherents of Cox. The easiest course was therefore adopted, and he was not mentioned at all.

## IV

Becon remained in Frankfort for some time after the Coxian triumph, and is said to have lived in the Horsemarket.<sup>1</sup> Presumably he continued with his work of preaching and writing, and despatches from England would have brought him the news that on 13 June 1555 a royal proclamation had been put forth against books, and that his name was mentioned among the authors prohibited.<sup>2</sup> When and why he left Frankfort, and where he went, we again do not know. He may have left with some of the "learned men" who had been in conference there about the revision of the liturgy, or he may have gone with Cox to Zurich at the end of November. During the winter of 1555 or the following spring he may have determined to settle in Marburg, his connexion with

1. Garrett, Exiles, pp.54 and 85.

2. Foxe, vii, p.127; Strype, Eccl.Mem., III.i, p. 418. The proclamation has "Theodore Basil otherwise called Thomas Beacon"; is this simply a precautionary prohibition, copied from the proclamation of 1546, or was literature appearing which bore the name of Basil? The prohibition would hardly be restricted to the early works.

which lasted, as he says, almost three years.

In the summer of 1556 we catch a glimpse of Becon in Strasbourg again.

A royal commission was issued on 16 June 1556 for the delivery of "certeyne letters and commaundementes under their Maiestyes pryvy seale" to eleven of the exiles,<sup>1</sup> and a certain John Brett was entrusted with its execution. The letters may have been warrants for arrest, or they may have contained offers of pardon if the recipients returned home immediately. When he was asked whether he had letters or processes, Brett replied that as letters he was given them, and as letters he would deliver them. His Narrative of the pursuit of English refugees in Germany under Q. Mary describes his adventures.

He arrived in Frankfort on 8 July, and pre-

1. Katherine Duchess of Suffolk, Richard Bertie, Sir Thomas Wrothe, Sir Henry Nevell, Sir William Stafford, Anthony Meyres, Edward Isaac, William Fyneux, Roger Whetnall, John Hales, and Jane Wilkinson. See Leadham, Transactions of the Royal Hist. Socy., New Series, xi (1897), p.118.

sented letters to Jane Wilkinson and John Hales. The latter "refused disobediently to receive" them,

...saying Minatory and with threates that the Quenes Maiesty had no power to sende proces into those parties...<sup>1</sup>

Brett then passed to Weinheim, and was attacked when he attempted to serve his letters upon the Duchess of Suffolk and Bertie. Seeking others, he went to Heidelberg (where he was detained eighteen days), Spires, and Venice, returning to Germany and arriving at Strasbourg on 30 August. There, he says,

...oute of the same house<sup>2</sup> I met with one callid Becon excepte I be greatly disceaved. He amongst other thinges had tolde me I mighte perhapps repent myne enterprise, and that he wolde not haue bene in my cote for a thowsand poundes to haue commed to deliver any letteres in those parties.<sup>3</sup>

Brett could not make contact with any of the gentry whom he sought, and so returned to England and re-

1. ibid, pp.119-120.

2. Richard Cooke's; see Garrett, Exiles, p.126.

3. Brett's Narrative, p.131.

ported to the Council on 18 October.

For what purpose Becon was in Strasbourg at this time, we do not know; it may have been a temporary visit, for the rest of his exile was spent in Marburg.<sup>1</sup> There he appears to have enjoyed the patronage of Philip, Landgrave of Hesse, and his son William. Dedicating to the latter the treatise Coenae sacrosanctae Domini Jesu Christi, et Missae Papisticae, Comparatio, he gives as one of his reasons for so doing,

...quod hic in Academia tua politioribus literis ut florentissima, ita viris insigniter doctis haud parum referta, triennium fere cum familia agens, constanti fama atque omnium sermone celebratum acceperim.....

It would seem from this that Becon returned for the last period of his exile to the tutorial work in which he had already spent so much time, and no doubt most of the Latin compositions listed by Bale in his Catalogus were written at Marburg.<sup>2</sup>

1. Bale, Catalogus, p.757. Becon appears to have been the only English exile resident there.
2. ibid, p.757; see Bib. I, A 41 and A 44-A 52.



The passage just quoted has two points of interest. The preface to the Comparatio is dated

Marpurgi, ex Museo nostro, mense Februarii  
Anno Christi 1559,<sup>1</sup>

and the colophon shows that it was printed at Basle by Oporinus in 1559.<sup>1</sup> From this it would seem that Becon was still in Marburg three months after Elizabeth's accession, and that he did not return to England until March or even later. If this were so, it would explain his reference to a residence of almost three years in Marburg. Even if he only removed there and settled permanently after speaking with Brett at Strasbourg, the period September 1556 — February 1558-9 would be nearly enough a triennium by his rough and ready methods of computation. If he had gone there soon after leaving Frankfurt, his stay would in fact be one of three years duration. Against this, however, is the baptism of his son Basil in St. Stephen's, Walbrook, on 14 January 1558-9 — unless, of course, he was not himself present at the ceremony.

1. New style.

This leads us to a more important question: did Becon's wife, and possibly one child or more, accompany him into exile, and were other children born abroad? If he escaped with his family, they did not go with him to Strasbourg or Frankfort, for no mention of them occurs in the records of those cities. It is difficult to discover how the wives and children of the refugees travelled — whether they crossed with the men, or whether they followed them later. The Census in Miss Garrett's Marian Exiles gives us little help here, and we can only conclude that the procedure varied according to circumstances. Coverdale, for instance, was accompanied by his wife,<sup>1</sup> while Mrs. Sandys came to her husband after he had been one year in exile.<sup>2</sup> It is not quite clear what Becon means by "triennium fere cum familia agens". Are we to understand that for almost three years he was living with his family in Marburg? or does he simply refer to his residence in the midst of the familia of learned

1. Garrett, Exiles, p.132.

2. Foxe, viii, p.598.

men and students at the University ? I am inclined to adopt the more obvious and direct interpretation,<sup>1</sup> and would accordingly suggest the following reconstruction of events.

Becon's family, consisting of his wife and possibly two little boys, and either travelling with him or following him at no great interval, was lodged in the comparative security of Marburg, while he took up his abode in Strasbourg, and later in Frankfort. In 1556, being no longer needed in the latter city, and having secured tutorial work at Marburg University, he rejoined his family, whom he had visited from time to time, and continued to live with them for the remainder of his exile. Towards the end of November 1558, danger being then past, his wife, shortly expecting delivery of a child, set off for England with her family, probably in the company of some of the returning refugees. The six-weeks journey was com-

1. Notice that Becon does not say that his family had resided in Marburg for three years, but that he had resided with them for that period.

pleted by the beginning of January, and the baby Basil, born either on the way or just after his mother's arrival, was baptized on 14 January.<sup>1</sup> Becon himself, having settled his affairs in Marburg, followed at the end of February or the beginning of March 1558-9 and, rejoining his family, soon settled in Canterbury.

1. Register of St. Stephen's, Walbrook, Harl. xlii. p. 1; parish registers show that it was customary to baptize children soon after birth, which renders it improbable that Basil was born in Marburg but not baptized there; there would be no reason for deferring the baptism until the return to England.

## CHAPTER 7

## CANON OF CANTERBURY

1559-1567

## I

With the accession of Elizabeth, who, wrote  
Becon,

...is to this Realme, that the sonne is to  
the earth after many stormy, cloudy and tem-  
pestuous dayes...<sup>1</sup>

the exiles looked to receive some recognition of  
their trials and their constancy in support of true  
religion. Rough lists drawn up by Cecil showed  
bishoprics, deaneries, canonries and benefices vac-  
ant,<sup>2</sup> and clergy at that time without promotion,<sup>3</sup>  
and among the latter appears Becon's name, a † be-  
fore it indicating that he was one of those marked  
out for special preferment. When appointments came

1. Book of Matrimony, F i, fol.ccccxciij verso.

2. Strype, Annals, I.i, pp.227-228.

3. ibid, pp.228-229.



to be made, however, he was passed over. It may be that he had, as Strype says, chosen "to serve God and his church in some privater capacity";<sup>1</sup> it may be that he had begun to abandon the position which he had taken up in Frankfort, and had become suspected of a tendency to nonconformity.<sup>2</sup> But an explanation may better be found in his activities during the exile. He had supported the Prayer Book and episcopal party, and had written words of encouragement to the persecuted protestants in England. But he had also (and it would not be forgotten) denounced the 'monstruous regiment of women' — and if Mary was born to be in subjection and not to rule, so was Elizabeth; if it was a mark of God's displeasure that a realm should have a woman as sovereign, then in spite of the overthrow of Romanism and the re-establishment of the Gospel, the Divine wrath was still upon England! The rest, it is true, had by their silent approval concurred in these sentiments, but they had not deliberately

1. ibid, p.229.

2. Colligan, op.cit., p.97.

put them forth, and they hastened to disown them when Elizabeth came to power.<sup>1</sup> It may well have been for this reason that Becon was not given the preferment which he deserved no less than his more fortunate fellows. Yet he did not go entirely unrewarded, for a prebend fell to him, and some time during 1559 he was collated to the fourth stall in the cathedral church of Christ at Canterbury<sup>2</sup> — probably the prebend which Cecil in his lists had marked as vacant.<sup>3</sup> In possession of this Becon remained until his death, adding thereto from time to time certain benefices to which he was presented.

. On 21 October 1560 he was appointed Rector of Buckland in Hertfordshire, though he does not appear to have held the living long.<sup>4</sup> A more im-

1. For an account of Aylmer's attempt to apologize and to extricate the exiles from the predicament into which Elizabeth's accession threw them, see Maitland, op.cit., Essay X.
2. Le Neve, Fasti, i, p.50: "Thomas Bacon or Beacon".
3. Strype, Annals, I.i, p.228.
4. Newcourt, Repertorium, i, p.815: Thomas Becon on the death of John Tilney; then Esdras Bland is shown as Rector, and then, 27 June 1567, Edwd. Hicks "per mort Bland".

portant preferment came his way a year later, when on 3 March 1560-1 he became Vicar of Christ Church, Newgate, which he held until his death.<sup>1</sup> This church, destroyed in the Great Fire of 1666, was reputed to be one of the most magnificent in London, three hundred feet long, with columns and pavement of marble, and was renowned for the number of celebrated people buried there.<sup>2</sup> On 3<sup>3</sup> or 4<sup>4</sup> April 1562 he was admitted to the vicarage of Sturry, a small village some three miles north-east of Canterbury,<sup>5</sup> and in the following year he was reinstated in his old living of St. Stephen's, Walbrook, which

1. Newcourt, Repertorium, i, p.318: Tho. Beaton (sic) alias Basell.... Hennessy, Nov. Repert., p.125: Thomas Beacon or Bekon or Basill, A.B.....then 28 January 1567-8, Hy. Bedell (Newcourt — "per mort Beaton").
2. There is a fine picture of the church and its surroundings circ.1547 in the front of the Register transcript, Harl.xxi.
3. Parker's Register, p.787.
4. ibid, p.404.
5. Becon is listed as not yet having compounded for the firstfruits of this benefice, ibid, p.427 (? early in 1564).

he resigned within a little while.<sup>1</sup> He was then presented to the rectory of St. Dionis Backchurch by the Dean and Chapter of Canterbury,<sup>2</sup> and retained this benefice also until his death.<sup>3</sup> The church was one of thirteen 'peculiars' in the Archdeaconry of London which belonged to the Archbishop of Canterbury and were exempt from the jurisdiction of the Bishop and the Archdeacon of London.

It is curious to find one who so constantly inveighs against the evils of pluralism and non-residence<sup>4</sup> himself in the ranks of the pluralists and non-residers ! The preface to the folio edition of Becon's works, however, may explain his apparent

1. Hennessy, Nov. Repert., p. 386; Philip Pettit was appointed in Becon's place, 1 July 1563.
2. 10 August, 1563. Strype, Parker, i, p. 258; Parker's Register, p. 434; also 802; Newcourt, Repertorium, i, p. 330 ("per mort Armerar [John Armeras]); Hennessy, Nov. Repert., p. 125.
3. Newcourt, Repertorium, "Theodore Newton, A.M., 26 Sept. 1567 per mor. Beacon; also Hennessy, Nov. Repert.
4. cf Jewel of Joy, P ii, pp. 431-432; the preface to The Fortress of the Faithful, P ii, p. 587; The Acts of Christ and of Antichrist: "Of their Doctrine", P iii, pp. 534-536; &c.

declension from principle:

Pastors were then<sup>1</sup> resident upon their benefices... Neither were they then troubled with many benefices (as the manner now-a-days is), but they were content with one; which one in those days was sufficient both for them and for their family, and also for the convenient relief of the poor, being far unlike our three-half-penny benefices, whereof seven or eight being put together<sup>2</sup> will scarcely furnish the pastor with such convenient expenses for him, his family, and the poor, as one benefice did in those days; so greatly hath blind superstition and foolish devotion increased the number of parish-churches.<sup>3</sup>

For Becon, who never ceased to complain of his poverty, this was doubtless a sufficient justification for his adding benefice to benefice.

Becon soon resumed his activities as a preacher, and Machyn records in his Diary three occasions on which he made the sermon;<sup>4</sup> he also

1. In the times of the Apostles and Fathers.
2. Becon himself held only three at once in addition to his canonry !
3. P 1, p.21.
4. On 21 October 1559, at the funeral of the Countess of Rutland (p.216 and Ellis's Shoreditch, p. 75); on 16 April 1560, at the funeral of John Bedy (p.231); and on 20 July 1562 at a wedding (p.288).



preached before the Lord Mayor and Aldermen in St. Mary Spital without Bishopsgate on 15 April 1560.<sup>1</sup> On 3 April 1566 Archbishop Parker wrote to Cecil regarding the preachers for Holy Week that year:

...for the third day<sup>2</sup> my lord mayor sent to me praying to me to obtain of Mr. Beacon (who they hear shall preach at the cross this next Sunday<sup>3</sup>) to supply that day. I promised that I would move him to satisfy their desire....<sup>4</sup>

These few notices afford only a slight indication of the demand which must have been made upon his services; others, unfortunately, I have not been able to trace.

We have likewise a record of two only of the special ecclesiastical duties which would devolve upon Becon as a canon of Canterbury. He is mentioned in a writ dated 23 January 1559-60 concerning a presentation to a benefice in the diocese of Win-

1. Cooper, Athenae, i, p.247.
2. Wednesday in Holy Week, 10 April 1566.
3. Palm Sunday, 7 April 1566.
4. Correspondence of Parker (PS), p.275; Strype, Parker, i, p.426; see the list of preachers for that Lent, ibid, iii, p.247.

chester, the affairs of which, pending the appointment of a new bishop, were being dealt with by Canterbury. With others, he acted on behalf of the Primate in the proceedings at which the right of presentation was confirmed to the patrons.<sup>1</sup> On 18 September 1561, with two other prebendaries, Stephen Nevinson and John Butler, Becon was commissioned by Parker to visit the Hospital of Eastbridge at Canterbury on 26 October between the hours of eight and ten in the morning, and to report upon its affairs.<sup>2</sup>

Becon is also named in a mandate issued by the Archbishop to the Dean and Chapter of Canterbury on 19 September 1560,<sup>3</sup> presumably in connexion with the visitation of the Cathedral which was held about that time in the Chapter House.<sup>4</sup> The clergy

1. Parker's Register, pp.203-205.

2. ibid, pp.380-382; also Strype, Parker, i, pp. 202-203; a further visitation was made in 1569, and reforms were effected, ibid, pp.565-566.

3. Parker's Register, p.631.

4. Strype, Parker, i, pp.144 f.

were to be called, and

...severally talked with, touching their ministration, doctrine, teaching, and manners. How they entered the ministry; by whom, and upon what testimonies. This done, then the Commissioners should hear and determine quarrels, complaints, and controversies; referring great and weighty matters to the hearing of the most reverend Father in God Matthew the Archbishop himself.

On this occasion, says Strype,

...there was a presentment made by the Prebendaries and Petty Canons, &c., by which it appeareth, that the Prebendaries came not to the divine service, and that the Ministers of the church were negligent in coming to the church. There was drunkenness among some of the Petty Canons, railing and jesting, with great disobedience. Some of them were great quarrelers. They had but seven Petty Canons, whereas there ought to have been twelve; and to supply the vacant rooms of the Petty Canons, they took men out of the town to serve; who had eight pounds a year apiece. Women did suspiciously resort to the houses of certain of the church. Mr Bale and Mr Goodrich presented, that the arms of Cardinal Pole, with the Cardinal's hat, were hung up in the church, which they thought "not decent, nor tolerable, but abominable, and not to be suffered".....<sup>1</sup>

Such were the conditions in Canterbury at this time.

1. ibid, pp.148-149.

It is improbable in the extreme that Becon was involved in these misdemeanours, but he may well have had in mind the scandals which he knew were going on around him, when he wrote in the preface to the folio edition of his works a lengthy indictment of the character of many of the ministers of the church.<sup>1</sup>

In the following year the Primate wrote in June or July to all the bishops of his province requesting that he might be furnished with certificates in respect of each clergyman, stating the name of the parish; the name, surname, and degree of the incumbent; whether he were priest or deacon, married or unmarried, learned or unlearned; whether he maintained hospitality and resided; whether he had been licensed and preached; and what other benefices he held. In giving specimens of this certificate, Strype fortunately selects, with another, one relating to Becon and one to his curate at Christ Church Newgate. The particulars given of Becon are:

1. P 1, pp.5-6.

Mr. Becon, Vicar. Baccalaur. Art. | Presbyter  
 Conjugatus | Doctus | Non residet | Degit  
 Cantuar, interdum apud S. Stephan. Lond. |  
 Praedicat, LicentiatuS | Sacerdotia duo habet,  
 istud et S. Stephan. in Walbrook.<sup>1</sup>

Nothing is said of the maintenance of hospitality, upon which Becon laid such stress,<sup>2</sup> though this was perhaps impossible in view of his non-residence.

## II

From his return until 1563 not a little of Becon's time must have been occupied in preparing for the press the collected or folio edition of his works, which he undertook "at the instant desire of certain godly and zealous brethren", and for the printing of which a license had been issued to John Day on 14 May 1560.<sup>3</sup> First, the pseudonym-

1. Strype, Parker, pp.187-190.

2. e.g., P i, pp.22 and 25; P ii, p.325.

3. See Arber, Transcript of the Register of the Company of Stationers of London, i, p.128:  
 "Recevyd of John Daye for his lycense for prynt-  
 inge of all Master Becon's works graunted the  
 xiiij Daye of Maye, and he geveth to ye howse  
 iij s iij d.



ous writings published during the reign of Henry VIII were "revised and diligently perused", alterations being made where necessary to bring them into closer conformity with contemporary opinion.<sup>1</sup> The short metrical Catechism<sup>2</sup> was replaced by the New Catechism,<sup>3</sup>

...both long and large, wherein I have comprehended the sum of holy scripture; so that in that one book the christian reader shall easily find whatsoever is necessary to be known, whether doctrine or manners be considered.<sup>4</sup>

This, divided into six parts and occupying over four hundred pages of the Parker Society edition, is really a compendium of theology in the form of a dialogue between a father and his precocious son who, not yet six years old, displays an extraordinary wealth of theological erudition, a mature judgement, and a surprizing knowledge of

1. See Detached Note E for an example.

2. Bib. I, A 11.

3. Bib. I, A 53.

4. P i, p.29.

the world !<sup>1</sup>

To complete the first volume, which seems to have appeared in 1560, Becon wrote The Book of Matrimony,<sup>2</sup> to which he prefixed the preface originally composed for the Bullinger-Coverdale treatise on marriage, altering nothing but the concluding paragraph. This work was finished, he tells us, during a "long and grievous sicknes",<sup>3</sup> and it is one of his most important. It suffers, however, from a disproportionate concern with coarse anti-papal polemic and with such unedifying matters as the extent of sexual depravity among the mediaeval clergy — both important items in the stock-in-trade of those who upheld the right of the minister to marry at his discretion.<sup>4</sup>

The second volume consists of works written during the reign of Edward VI, all previously pub-

1. For a further discussion of certain aspects of the Catechism, see Detached Note F.
2. Bib. I, A 54.
3. F i, fol.cccclxvi; see below, p. 401.
4. The Book of Matrimony is considered in more detail in ch. 8, § II.

lished, and now reprinted with corrections. Becon describes tham as

...divers little treatises persuading unto virtue, and dissuading from vice, as I may speak nothing of the principal points of christian religion, and of the godly exercises of a true and devout Christian toward the Lord his God, both by spiritual meditations, godly prayers, hearty thanksgivings, &c.<sup>1</sup>

None of the works in the third volume had previously been printed in England,<sup>2</sup> though some had been published abroad. The Comfortable Epistle and the Supplication have already been noticed, but of the rest of the volume, it is uncertain how much was written under Mary or in exile, and how much under Elizabeth, Becon's encomium upon whom must not be omitted:

...a most worthy patroness of all true religion and good learning, a most noble defender of all godly-disposed people, a noble conqueror of antichrist and of his most wicked kingdom, a princess for her knowledge, learning, wisdom, godliness, and virtue, for her tender affect-

1. P i, p.29.

2. See the table at the front of the folio edition.

ion toward us her grace's subjects, yea, and for her clemency toward all men, even her very adversaries, worthy, whose praises the eloquent orators with their sugared and ornate eloquence, the noble historiographers with their learned pens, the famous poets with their most pleasant metre, may commend to immortality.<sup>1</sup>

The Displaying of the Popish Mass,<sup>2</sup> to which reference has already been made in connexion with Becon's views on kneeling, was probably written abroad, and Lowndes mentions a Latin edition published at Basle in 1559. I do not propose to quote extensively from its grossly blasphemous and indecent pages, wherein he gives an account of the priests — whom he apostrophizes:

...ye abominable whore-masters, ye filthy fornicators, ye stinking sodomites, ye deceitful deflowerers of maids, ye devilish defilers of men's wives, ye cankered corrupters of widows, and ye lecherous locusts...<sup>3</sup>

— clad in their "gay, gaudy, gallant, gorgeous,

1. P i, p. 29.

2. Bib. I, A. 42.

3. P iii, p. 268.

game-players' garments",<sup>1</sup> at their

...most wicked, damnable, devilish, idolatrous, heathenish, vile, stinking, blasphemous, detestable, and abominable massing.<sup>2</sup>

Every vestment, every movement, every gesture, every word is taken in turn, and held up to ridicule in a shameful way, the whole action being interpreted in a disparaging manner by means of a running commentary interspersed with disgusting innuendos. The work must be read as a whole if its character is to be properly seen. Nothing can extenuate such a production, and we can only regret that Becon should ever have lent his pen to uses so foul and despicable.

A comparison between the Lord's Supper and the Pope's Mass,<sup>3</sup> a free rendering into English of the Coenae...et Missae...Comparatio,<sup>4</sup> though in the

1. P iii, p.260.

2. P iii, p.284.

3. Bib. I, A 56.

4. Bib. I, A 43.



style of the time, is less objectionable, and contains nothing which need detain us. Its arguments and antitheses display no originality, but apparently the public for whom such literature was intended did not tire of its inordinate repetitions, so long as the Mass and the Pope were being denounced.

Next may be mentioned two lesser-known works, omitted for some reason from the Parker Society edition — the Relics of Rome,<sup>1</sup> a catalogue of innovations in religion alleged to have been introduced into the Church by the Pope and "his adherents", and the Monstrous Merchandise of the Romish Bishops,<sup>2</sup> an inventory of relics which may have been inspired by Calvin's Admonitio de Reliquiis.<sup>3</sup>

1. Bib. I, A 59. Dedicated to John Parkhurst, Bishop of Norwich, who writes to Foxe: "Commend me ..... to Mr Day and his wife, and thank him for the book of the Relics of Rome which he sent me. I will thank Mr. Becon, which dedicated the same to my name, another time, if God so will". Strype, Annals, I.ii, p.46.
2. Bib. I, A 58.
3. Opera, viii, pp.203-215; cf F iii, fol. clxxviii verso.

The sources of the Monstrous Merchandise are enumerated in the preface:

1. An account of the relics, &c., to be found in Roman churches, translated from a Latin work printed in Rome by Stephen Plancke de Patavia in 1489.

2. A register of what Becon himself had gleaned from chronicles and histories.

3. ...an olde written boke, which is yet remayning in the Cathedral church of Cantorburye. This boke is called Memorale multorum, Henrici Prioris, and it may appeare by the accompte to be cclxii yeares since it was written, and lefte for a perpetuall remembraunce of such thinges as at that tyme appertayned unto the monasterye, cōmonly called Christes church, being the a place of monkes, nowe thorowe the benefite & liberalitye of the most noble king Henrye the eyght, a most worthy Cathedrall Church, and a place of godly and learned Prebendaryes, &c.....<sup>1</sup>

4. ...a lytle worke of the Indulgenses, pardons, priuiledges and stations that be at Rome, trulye copied out of an olde printed English book word for word, and also translated out of an olde latin booke, printed more than lxxii yeares paste.....<sup>2</sup>

1. F iii, fol.clxxxxii verso.

2. F iii, fol.clxxviii verso.

5. Indulgences and pardons taken out of a Primer printed by Francis Bryckeman in 1521.

6. Exorcisms and conjurations used by Papists, from Agends, Benedictionals, Manuals, Missals, Journals, Portasses, &c.

7. Ulrich von Hutten's Trias Romana.

To the material thus collected Becon added

The Reportes of certaine men, concerning Rome, and the lewde behaviour vsed in the same.....

which Strype appears to have regarded as a separate work.<sup>1</sup>

Among the Reportes is a recantation made by Dr. Richard Smith.<sup>2</sup> This man, an eminent scholar and at heart a convinced Romanist (though he twice recanted), became the first Regius Professor of

1. Cranmer, i, p.244; Tanner, Bibliotheca, p.85, also treats it as a separate work: "Liber hic .... Thomae nostro attribuitur"; he had apparently not realized that it was to be found in the folio edition.

2. See D.N.B. Strype prints the first recantation from Becon's Reportes, Cranmer, ii, pp.795-799.

Divinity at Oxford in the reign of Henry VIII. Failing to satisfy the authorities of his orthodoxy, he was deprived in the following reign, and relinquishing his chair to Peter Martyr, fled from the country and eventually found sanctuary in Louvain, where he was appointed public professor of Divinity. He was restored to his chair upon Mary's accession, and took a prominent part in the examination of Latimer, Ridley, and Cranmer. When Elizabeth came to the throne he again lost his professorship, and after escaping from Parker's custody, made his way to Douay, where he became Dean of the church of St. Peter, Chancellor of the University, and Professor of Theology. He died there on 9 July 1563.

In one of his works, Confutatio eorum, quae Philippus Melanchthon obijcit contra Missae sacrificium propitiatorium,<sup>1</sup> Smith assailed Becon on account of

...vanissima quaedam nugamenta et mera somnia

1. Louvain, 1562.

....que ille libro suo, cui titulum praeficit,  
de reliquiis Romae, non tam imperite et impud-  
enter, quam impie effutivit.<sup>1</sup>

Refuting the statements made in the Relics of Rome  
by the simple expedient of asserting, with little  
or no citation of authorities, that they were all  
untrue, and that

...libellus....tuus, Beacone....nihil fere  
complectitur praeter splendida mendacia...

Smith concluded with the words,

...vobis a Deo mentem postulo saniozem, ut  
ad unitatem catholicae ecclesiae et S.R.  
sedis, omnium aliarum sedium matris.....  
et capitis, vos demum recipiatis.....<sup>2</sup>

To this Becon lost no time in replying, in  
the preface-dedicatory<sup>3</sup> of the Monstrous Merchand-  
ise of the Romish Bishops. He refers to

...mine ennemies and backbiters, of whome

1. fol.57 verso - 58 retro.

2. fol.63 retro.

3. To Francis, Earl of Bedford.



there is no small number in these our daies, which doing nothing the selues praise worthy, but lying loitring and lurking in corners as unprofitable clods of the earth, born, as it may seeme, onely to consume the good frutes of the ground, are redy to carp and reprehend, what so euer is doon of other. Of this company is that doubler dissembler and ranke Papiste Richard Smith, sometime reader of the diuinity lecture in Oxford, and nowe a suttlesicophant and blasphemous backbiters of other mennes godly trauayles, liuing in Brabant as an ennemye of his owne natiue countrye and an extreme aduersarye of Goddes true religion and of the Quenes highnesses mooste godlye and lawfull proceedinges, when notwithstanding in Oxforde before the Quenes maiesties visitoures he subscribed to all the religion receiued now in this realm of England....<sup>1</sup>

Becon wastes no time in refuting Smith's refutation, but concludes with a characteristic malediction:

This Smith hath not only sharpened his most virulent and poysonfull pen against me, but also against the best learned men in Englad that be now in authority,<sup>2</sup> yea and that most uniustley and unworthely, thinking by this meanes to get him great honour of those Papistes with whom he is daily conversant..... But better had it bene for him neuer to haue knowne the waye of righteousness, then after his knowledge, thus Jewdaslike to goo away from it, and not onely to goo away from it,

1. F iii, fol.clxxx.

2. Smith mentions Jewel, Pilkington, Grindal, and Horne in addition to Becon, op.cit., fol.57 verso.

but also to persecute it, to blaspheme it, to wryte against it &c. Verely great is his dampnation, except he spedely repent.....<sup>1</sup>

Among these later works are two more collections of probations, a favourite form of composition with Becon. One is scriptural — The Commonplaces of the holy scripture,<sup>2</sup> dedicated to his

...dear countrymen and faithful ministers of the Gospel of Jesu Christ, watching and attending upon the Lord's flock in the parishes of Norfolk and Suffolk;<sup>3</sup>

and the other patristic — Certain Articles of Christian Religion,<sup>4</sup> dedicated to Grindal. There is also a harmony of the four Gospels, Christ's Chronicle,<sup>5</sup> and a Summary of the New Testament,<sup>6</sup> an analysis of each book, chapter by chapter,

1. F iii, fol.clxxx verso. Strype mentions this passage between Smith and Becon in Cranmer, i, p.609.

2. Bib. I, A 55.

3. P iii, p.290.

4. Bib. I, A 57.

5. Bib. I, A 62.

6. Bib. I, A 63.

dedicated to Thomas Moore, parson of Wethringset, to whose diligence and good example, "known more than these twenty-four years", Becon pays tribute,<sup>1</sup> acknowledging his constancy during the late "cruel and bloody times", when it pleased God

...to preserve and keep safe from the ravening teeth of the most ravening wolves certain godly and learned preachers, which in the renovation of the evangelic doctrine might shew themselves valiant and courageous workmen, unto the confusion of antichrist, and unto the utter destruction of his antichristian kingdom; in the company of which preachers and setters of God's most wholesome doctrine I number you to be neither the last nor the least.<sup>2</sup>

The Demands of Holy Scripture,<sup>3</sup> really two books in one, is a sort of Catechism; in the dedication to the "Mayor and his Brethren of Sandwich in Kent" Becon explains that the purpose of the work is "to help forward some point of godly doctrine to be taught in your new-erected school" — Sandwich School, which had just been founded.<sup>4</sup> The Diver-

1. P iii, p.566.

2. P iii, p.563.

3. Bib. I, A 64.

4. Preface dated 1 September 1563; P iii, p.601.

sity between God's word and man's invention<sup>1</sup> and The Acts of Christ and of Antichrist<sup>2</sup> are both lists of comparisons in which protestant principles are extolled and Romish practices and teachings condemned; the Diversity appears to be a free version of Francois Lambert's Antithesis verbi dei et inventorum hominum. Two short compositions, The Glorious Triumph of God's most blessed word,<sup>3</sup> dedicated to Archbishop Parker

...as a testimonie of my seruiceable hearte and faithful obedience towarde your honour, not hauyng otherwise wherewith in any poynt to shewe my thanckfull mynde towarde your grace, whiche hathe so oft and so many wayes most liberally deserued of me....<sup>4</sup>

and a dialogue between Man and Reason entitled The Praise of Death<sup>5</sup> conclude the third volume of the collected works, which was published at the beginn-

1. Bib. I, A 60.

2. Bib. I, A 61.

3. Bib. I, A 65.

4. F iii, fol.cccclxx verso.

5. Bib. I, A 66.

ing of 1564.<sup>1</sup> The lengthy preface, dated 17 January 1563-4,<sup>2</sup> carries a dedication to the archbishops and bishops of the English Church, acquaints them with its condition, and urges them to stir up the gift that is in them and to complete the work of reformation.

Only one more work came from Becon's pen before he laid it down for ever — the New Postil,<sup>3</sup> a collection of "honest plain sermons" upon the Sunday and Holy Day Gospels which, according to Strype, "seem to be only a translation either out of Latin or Dutch [German],"<sup>4</sup> an opinion for which there is no definite evidence. The New Postil went into a second edition in the year following its publication, and affords a fitting close to the literary labours of one who was both diligent and respected as a preacher.

1. Bib. I, A 68.

2. On this date, see Detached Note D (I).

3. Bib. I, A 69.

4. Parker, i, pp. 454-455.



## III

Those who had returned from exile soon exhibited signs of the disunity which had marred their sojourn abroad. The extreme elements among them began to gain coherence and power, and with the emergence of the Puritan party as a force in ecclesiastical politics the controversy over vestments assumed a new prominence. Part of the wider question of ceremonies, it had been initiated by Hooper's obstinate and unreasonable refusal to wear the cope and episcopal rochet at his consecration as bishop of Gloucester, and had been fomented and exacerbated by the troubles of the refugees in Frankfort. The Act of Uniformity of 1559<sup>1</sup> marked the revival in England of the conflict which had already been waged on the banks of the Main, and during the last years of Becon's life it entered upon a more acute phase.

The second statute of Elizabeth's reign enacted, inter alia,

1. 1 Elizabeth cap.2.

...that such ornaments of the church, and of the ministers thereof, shall be retained and be in use, as was in the Church of England, by authority of Parliament, in the second year of the reign of King Edward VI, until other order shall be therein taken by authority of the queen's majesty...<sup>1</sup>

and the Prayer Book of 1559 ordered

...that the minister at the time of the Communion, and at other times in his ministration, shall use such ornaments in the Church as were in use by authority of Parliament in the second year of the reign of King Edward VI.....<sup>2</sup>

There is no doubt that the effect of these regulations was to restore the vestments of the first Edwardine Prayer Book; there is no doubt, on the other hand, that at the conclusion of the royal visitation ordered by Elizabeth in 1559 there were few eucharistic vestments left to wear.<sup>3</sup> Most of them had been destroyed or otherwise disposed of, not because they were illegal, but because they

1. Gee and Hardy, Documents, p.466.

2. Liturgical Services, Queen Elizabeth (PS), p.53.

3. W.M.Kennedy, The Interpretations of the Bishops, pp.11-12.

were reminders of the late persecutions. The bishops, however, felt it necessary to define what vestments were permitted, not only by the Act and the rubric, but also by the thirtieth royal injunction (that relating to dress inside and outside the church), which enjoined ministers to use

...such seemly habits, garments and such square caps as were most commonly and orderly received in the latter year of the reign of King Edward the Sixth; not meaning to attribute any holiness or special worthiness to the said garments, but as S. Paul writeth, Omnia dicenter et secundum ordinem fiant (1 Cor. xiv cap.)

This they did in the course of the Interpretations which they drew up in explanation of the royal injunctions. Two of these Interpretations required the minister to go abroad decently apparelled, and to use a cope at the celebration of the Eucharist and a surplice at all other ministrations.<sup>1</sup> The cope, however, was not enforced, and in the end it was around the surplice that the vestment controversy raged.<sup>2</sup>

1. Kennedy, op.cit., pp.15,30 and 31 (items 8 and 13 in the Petyt MSS of the Interpretations), and 41 (items as in the Corpus Christi [Cambridge] MSS).

2. See Kennedy's study for details.

Both ceremonies and vestments figured prominently in the proceedings of the Convocation which met on 13 January 1562-3. Following the discussion of the Edwardine XLII Articles and their revision, Sandys proposed in the upper house that private baptism and the signing with the cross in baptism be abolished, while thirty-three members of the lower house subscribed to the following petition:

1. That the psalms be sung distinctly by the whole congregation, or said with other prayers by the minister alone, and that "all curious singing and playing of the organs may be removed";
2. That in future only ministers may baptize, and that the sign of the cross be omitted;
3. That kneeling at the reception of the communion  
     ...may be left indifferent to the discretion  
     of the ordinary: for that some in kneeling do  
     not only knock, but oftentimes also super-  
     stitiously behave themselves;
4. That copes and surplices be disused, and all ministers in their ministry content themselves with "a grave, comely, and side-garment";

5. That ministers should not be compelled to wear caps and gowns like the Romish clergy;

6. That the thirty-third<sup>1</sup> Article regarding the punishment of such as do not conform entirely to the ceremonies appointed by public authority, be mitigated;

7. That "all saints' feasts and holydays, bearing the name of a creature" be abrogated, or observed by means of some suitable commemoration which would not involve the suspension of work for that day.<sup>2</sup>

The house did not agree to these suggestions, whereupon, on 13 February, a further motion was put forward. Becon had not been one of the signatories to the rejected petition, but his name now appears in the list of those who supported the new propositions. These were:

I. That all the Sundays in the year, and principal feasts of Christ, be kept holydays; and all other holydays to be abrogated.

1. In the XXXIX Articles of 1571, no. XXXIV.

2. Strype, Annals, I.i, pp.500-502.



II. That in all parish churches the minister in common prayer turn his face towards the people; and there distinctly read the divine service appointed, where all the people assembled may hear and be edified.

III. That in ministering the sacrament of baptism, the ceremony of making the cross in the child's forehead may be omitted, as tending to superstition.

IV. That forasmuch as divers communicants are not able to kneel during the time of the communion, for age, sickness, and sundry other infirmities; and some also superstitiously both kneel and knock; that the order of kneeling may be left to the discretion of the ordinary within his jurisdiction.

V. That it be sufficient for the minister, in time of saying divine service, and ministering of the sacraments, to use a surplice; and that no minister say service, or minister the sacraments, but in a comely garment or habit.

VI. That the use of organs be removed.<sup>1</sup>

This motion provoked a heated discussion in the house, which continued throughout the morning, during which the fourth article in particular was subjected to severe criticism. In the afternoon a vote was taken, twenty-seven abstaining, and although forty-three gave their assent to the propositions

1. ibid, pp.502-503.

as against thirty-five, the proxies turned the scale, and the motion was lost by a single vote.<sup>1</sup>

Then from the lower house came a petition regarding discipline containing twenty-one articles and subscribed by sixty-four members, the first signature being Becon's. Five of the articles are interesting as indicating his views at this time:

III. That no private baptism be ministered hereafter, but only by those that be ministers of the church.

IV. That in public baptism, the father of the infant (if he possibly may) be present: and that he, and the godfathers and godmothers, shall openly profess and recite the articles of the Christian faith, commonly called the Creed, and desire that the infant may in that faith be baptized, and received into the church of Christ. And they shall not answer in the infant's name to such questions as heretofore have been demanded of them in that behalf.

V. That it may be added to the confession which is used to be made before the ministration of the holy communion, that the communicants do detest and renounce the idolatrous mass.

VI. That no person abide within the church

1. ibid, pp.504-506; Burnet, Reformation, iv, pp. 574-575, Coll.III.i, no.LXXIV.

during the time of the communion, unless he do communicate. That is, they shall depart immediately after the exhortation be ended, and before the confession of the communicants.

VII. That all images of the Trinity and of the Holy Ghost be defaced; and that roods and all other images, that have been, or hereafter may be superstitiously abused, be taken away out of all places, public and private, and utterly destroyed.<sup>1</sup>

It does not appear that anything was done about this petition.

These proceedings were sufficient to show the relative strength of the Puritans and their supporters, and of those who stood for the Prayer Book, and for the vestments and ceremonies permitted by the Act of 1559 and the royal injunctions as interpreted by the bishops. Parker now began to press for the establishment of the uniformity which the law prescribed and the Elizabethan ideal of a national church required. It is clear that not all those who supported the two motions regarding ceremonies and the petition on discipline were committed to the policy of the extremists. Some, for in-

1. Strype, Annals, I.i, p.508; see 507-512.

stance, who voted against the second motion subscribed to the petition. There were not a few who desired further progress in the direction of moderate reform, yet who would have been content to make concessions and to halt short of the objective proposed by the radicals. Of these it would seem that Becon was one. Fully in sympathy with many of the Puritan ideals, and anxious to see certain changes in the matter of ceremonies and vestments, he held nevertheless to the opinion which he had endorsed at Frankfort, that the practices of which the advanced party complained were "in their own nature indifferent". If therefore for the sake of edification it seemed expedient either to retain or to abolish such practices, then within reasonable limits he was prepared to concur — though, for his own part, he would prefer to see further reforms effected. It will have been noticed that most of the changes demanded in Convocation had already been conceded by the Coxians to Whittingham — but solely in the interest of peace and quietness, and not because the ceremonies or usages themselves

were in any sense "impure or papistical".<sup>1</sup> So far Becon had gone then, and so far he was prepared to go again. His attitude is perhaps partly to be ascribed to the fact that he does not seem to have come under the sway of Calvinism to the same extent as some of his contemporaries; his opinions had been formed under Lutheran influences, and those influences remained dominant. He had little association with Geneva, and during his exile moved almost exclusively within a Lutheran sphere, entrenching himself for almost three years in Marburg, while others encountered new ideas and developed existing ones in the cities of Switzerland. His real position, in so far as it can be defined, is considered in the next chapter.

As one of the London incumbents, Becon was involved one year later in the proceedings taken by Grindal to enforce uniformity in his diocese. Not a few of the city clergy had renounced the surplice, tippet, and square cap, and did not conform to the

1. Orig. Let., ii, p.754.



Prayer Book. In January 1563-4 the Queen's pleasure regarding the habits was signified to them in an archidiaconal charge delivered in the church of St. Sepulchre, and of those present one hundred and eight signified their intention of conforming; only eight refused. On 24 March the use of the scholar's gown and cap was enjoined, and the surplice was ordered to be worn at all divine ministrations. The clergy were summoned to Lambeth and their subscription was demanded, failing which sequestration was to follow immediately and, at the end of three months, if submission was still refused, deprivation. When all were assembled, with the Archbishop, Grindal, and others of the ecclesiastical commission, the Bishop's Chancellor spoke:

My Masters and the Ministers of London, the Council's pleasure is, that strictly ye keep the unity of apparel like to this man,

whereupon he pointed to one Robert Cole, who had at first refused to conform and then had complied, and now stood before his brethren, a model of clerical decorum in his scholar's gown, tippet, and square cap. Those present were further enjoined

to observe inviolably the rubric in the Prayer Book, the royal injunctions, and "the Book of Convocation", that is, presumably, the new draft of thirty-eight articles prepared from the XLII Articles, and issued in English with one addition as the XXXIX Articles of 1571. The Chancellor concluded:

Ye that will presently subscribe, write Volo. Those that will not subscribe, write Nolo. Be brief; make no words.

Here some would have spoken, but they were silenced:

Peace, Peace. Apparitor, call the churches... Masters, answer presently, sub poena contemptus: and set your names.

Then the clergy were called, beginning with the Peculiars of Canterbury.<sup>1</sup>

Many were surprized at these "resolute doings", and not a few refused to sign. Some persisted, were sequestered, and later deprived. Whittingham and Becon, however, though they refused at first, afterwards, according to Strype, "subscribed, and were preferred". Becon, he goes on to say, "had Wal-

1. Strype, Grindal, pp.144-145.

broke and another benefice in London," which is not, of course, correct; he had by then resigned St. Stephen's, and was in possession of St. Dionis Backchurch and Christ Church, Newgate. He received no subsequent preferment.

Later in the same year Parker asked for an assurance that his own cathedral church was conforming to the rites and ceremonies ordered by the Prayer Book. A certificate was accordingly furnished to the Archbishop's Commissary, and to it Becon, as one of the Prebendaries, set his hand.<sup>1</sup> It is worth printing in full, not only for the account of the services and ceremonies in use at Canterbury at that time, but more especially because we can learn from it what vestments Becon, in common with his fellow Canons, wore in his ministrations. If 'churchmanship' (to use an anachronism) can be judged by externals, the certificate enables us to appreciate something of his position.

1. He signs here, Thomas Beacon.

...we do certify, that there is no doctrine taught or defended by us, or any of us, not by any preacher of our church to our knowledge, other than that which is approved by the word of God, and set forth within this realm by public authority.

The Common Prayer daily through the year, though there be no Communion, is sung at the communion table, standing north and south, where the high altar did stand. The Minister, when there is no Communion, useth a surplice only, standing on the east side of the table with his face toward the people.

The holy Communion is ministered ordinarily the first Sunday of every month through the year. At what time the table is set east and west. The Priest which ministereth, the Pystoler and Gospeler, at that time wear copes. And none are suffered then to tarry within that chancel but the communicants.

For the ministering of the Communion we use bread appointed by the Queen's Highness Injunctions.

The evening prayer in winter is between three and four; in summer between four and five of the clock in the afternoon. At which prayers Mr Dean, when he is here, and every [one] of the Prebendaries, are present every day once at least, appareled, in the choir. And when they preach, with surplice and silk hoods.

The preachers, being at home, come to the Common Prayer on Sundays and holydays, wearing surplices and hoods.

The Petty Canons, the Lay Clerks, and Choristers, wear surplices in the choir daily.

The schoolmaster for grammer, the usher, and the Queen's Highness scholars, come to

the choir on Sundays and holydays in surplices.

Thirdly,<sup>1</sup> we certify, that touching the manners, usages, and behaviours for ourselves, for the preachers, and other inferior Ministers within our church, we know none that liveth unorderly, or to use himself otherwise than is by order prescribed and permitted by the Queen's Highness Injunctions.<sup>2</sup>

This confirms Becon's adiaphorism in the matter of ceremonies; he certainly seems to have had no objection to wearing in the cathedral at Canterbury the vestments there in use. His conformity, after refusing to submit at Lambeth, cannot be dismissed as vacillation. He felt it right at the time to withhold his subscription, but later, having considered the whole question and understanding that no question of principle was involved, he had equally no scruple about submitting. In the New Catechism, too, he affirms his view that

...gestures are free, so that none occasion of evil be either done or offered.....<sup>3</sup>

1. The second affirmation would seem to be that relative to the services.
2. Strype, Parker, i, pp.364-366.
3. See above, pp.275 ff.



The following portion of the dialogue is interesting:

Father: ...come off, tell me, what sayest thou concerning the vestures which the ministers use at the ministration of the Lord's supper ?

Son: In some reformed churches the ministers use both a surplice and a cope; in some only a surplice; in some neither cope nor surplice, but their own decent apparel.

Father: And what thinkest thou in this behalf ?

Son: When our Lord and Saviour Christ Jesus did minister the sacrament of his body and blood to his disciples, he used none other but his own common and daily apparel, and so likewise did the apostles after him.... After that time, fond foolish fancy of man's idle brain devised, without the authority of God's word, that the minister in the divine service and in the ministration of the holy sacraments should use a white linen vesture, which we now commonly call a surplice.....

Then, the erudite child continues, with the increase of superstition, both churches and ministers became more and more gorgeously decked, until the use of sumptuous garments was considered essential to the conduct of divine service and the celebration of the Mass —

Wherefore, in my judgement, it were meet and convenient that all such disguised apparel were utterly taken away; forasmuch as it is but the vain invention of man, and hath been greatly abused of the massing papists....

Father: But what thinkest thou of the surplice, which is now commonly used in the most part of the reformed churches? Is it lawful to wear a surplice, or not?

Son: In things indifferent we may use our liberty, which we have gotten in Christ. Therefore if a magistrate, being godly, command that the minister in the time of his administration wear a surplice, not for the maintenance of superstition, but for a seemly and decent order, his commandment in this behalf is to be obeyed, and no godly minister ought to resist it..... But in things that be indifferent, we must take heed that we clog no man's conscience, nor make that a thing of necessity which is mere voluntary.<sup>1</sup>

This passage apart, Becon makes none but passing allusions to the question of vestments; it was, for him, obviously not important enough to demand extensive treatment in any of his works.<sup>2</sup>

1. P ii, pp.299-300

2. In the preface to the folio edition, Becon enlarges upon the symbolism of the Elizabethan bishop's vestments: "As they see you clad with vestures and colours black and white (the white rochet signifieth purity and innocency of life, the black chimer, mortification to the world and all worldly things.....) so they find in your behaviour nothing but uncorruption of life and contempt of worldly things....." P i, p.31.

## IV

Compared with Becon's life prior to his return from exile, the years of which an account has now been given were quiet and on the whole uneventful. He seems to have resided during this time for the most part in his prebendal house at Canterbury, under the shadow of the great cathedral, except when preaching took him away (chiefly to London), or when the affairs of one of his benefices required his attention. Occupied in daily attendance at the Common Prayer in the choir, in chapter business, and in study, writing, and the revision of his works, he passed the last years of his life peacefully and congenially. His health at this time does not appear to have been good, and this may have disinclined him to enter more actively into public and ecclesiastical affairs. He describes the Book of Matrimony as "the frute of my labours and paynes in my late and long sickenes",<sup>1</sup> and this may be the illness to which he refers in his letter to Parker,<sup>2</sup> the date of which is unknown.

1. F i, fol.cccclxvi verso.

2. Bib. I, A 67.

My most humble duties considered towards your Grace: it may  
 please your Honours to understand, that as it greatly delighted me  
 to hear of your Graces prosperous returne into this country, whither  
 (I doubt not) shall be greatly both true & glory of God and also  
 the profit of his people, so especially it not a little grieved me, that  
 thereto should be contrary infirmities and distastes, whereby I have  
 bene troubled more then this halfe yeare at several times, unto  
 greatesse losse of my time and hindering of my studies, I could not  
 attend upon your Grace according to my duty. But to delay in the  
 mean season my servicable and faithful service towards your Ho-  
 nous, I find that your Grace an able monument worthy to be pre-  
 served and embraced for antiquities sake, namely, an exposition  
 upon 3 Gospels of S. Matthe, and of S. Luke, with all 3 Epistles  
 of S. Pauls both in Latin and English: Wherunto my selfe  
 have added by Martinus halbe added six more pages, that is a  
 couple of fittie Carons, and six chapters, both of its moste carefully written  
 from God with your Grace continuall health and prosperous felicity,  
 with daily increase of honour. From your Graces Metropolitane  
 Church at Cantebury this present 24 dayes.

Your Graces moste humble

Thos. Bacon

Thomas Becon's Letter

to

Archbishop Parker



This seems to be the only manuscript in Becon's own hand now extant, and reads as follows:

My moste humble dutie consydered towarde  
 youre grace: it maye | please youre Honoure  
 to vnderstande, that as it greatly delyghted  
 me | to heare of youre graces prosperous re-  
 turne into thys contrye, whyche | (I doubte  
 not) shall be greatly bothe vnto y<sup>e</sup> glorie of  
 God and vnto | the profytt of hys people, so  
 lykewyse it not a lyttle greued me, that |  
 hytherto thorowe certayne infirmities and  
 diseases, wherwythe I haue | bene troubles<sup>d</sup>  
 more then thys half yeare at certayne tymes  
 vnto y<sup>e</sup> | greate losse of my tyme and hynd-  
 rauns of my syudies, I coulde not | attende  
 vpon youre grace accordyng to my dutie. But  
 to declare in the | meane season my seruise-  
 able and faythefull hearte towarde youre  
 Ho|noure, I send vnto youre grace an olde  
 monument worthy to be pre|serued and embras-  
 ed for y<sup>e</sup> antiquities sake, namely, an ex-  
 posicion | vpon y<sup>e</sup> Gospelles of S. Marcke, and  
 of S. Luke, wythe all y<sup>e</sup> Epistles | of S. Paule  
 bothe in Latin and Englyshe: wherunto my  
 wyffe | youre Graces daly Oratrix hathe added  
 hyr poore present, that is a | couple of fatte  
 capons and syx chykins, bothe of vs moste en-  
 tierly wyshyng | from God vnto youre Grace,  
 continuall healthe and prosperous felicitie, |  
 wythe dayly encrease of honoure. From youre  
 Graces Metropolitically | Church at Cantor-  
 burye thys present Wednysdaye.

your Graces moste humble:

Tho. Becon.

At the comparatively early age of fifty-five  
 Becon died at his home in Canterbury on 30 June

1567.<sup>1</sup> There is no record of his burial, which probably took place in the city, if not in the cathedral itself.<sup>2</sup>

1. Parker's Register, p.525; cf pp.833 and 834; also Le Neve, Fasti, i, p.50. There is no foundation for the statement, to be found in works of reference and elsewhere, that Becon died in 1570 at the age of 60.
2. The cathedral burial records do not begin until 1570, and the burial registers of other Canterbury churches contain no reference to Becon's burial.

## CHAPTER 8

## THOMAS BECON THE REFORMER

To conclude this account of the part played by Thomas Becon in the English Reformation, an attempt must be made to estimate his importance, and the position which he occupied in relation to the various ecclesiastical parties and movements of thought in the England of his day. During the course of this study many aspects of his writings and teachings have been treated in some detail, and only his views on the Sacraments and on marriage remain to be examined at any length.

## I

Great interest naturally attaches to any reformer's sacramental theories, but in Becon's case only his view of the Lord's Supper demands special consideration. His teaching on sacraments in general is in full accord with that of the Articles, though expressed in different terms. He emphasizes that they are outward signs or token's of member-

ship of the true Church<sup>1</sup> and of a Christian man's profession; pledges of God's mercy, grace, and favour; reminders of that charity which ought to exist between the followers of the Lord; and testimonials

1. Becon does not discuss extensively the doctrine of the Church, but two passages may be quoted as expressing his views. In the Sick Man's Salve he writes: "...I confess that to be the holy catholic and apostolic church which is the company and fellowship of the saints, that is to say, of the faithful, which are sanctified and made holy by the Spirit of God, and by the blood of Christ our Saviour; which have the pure word of God truly and sincerely preached, and the sacraments duly and faithfully ministered among them; which excommunicate all disobedient notable sinners, and receive into their fellowship such as unfeignedly repent and turn from their wickedness, which study in all things to please the Lord God, and to live 'in all godliness and honesty'", P iii, p.143: of the Catechism — the true Church "...is that holy congregation or fellowship of God's elect, which cannot err, nor be brought into error, much less perish and be damned [note here the influence of Calvinistic thought]...."; its 'notes' are:- "...the sincere, true, and uncorrupt preaching of God's word, without the intermixture or mingling of man's doctrine.....the true administration of the sacraments according to the institution and ordinance of Christ.....fervent prayer and the diligent invocation of God in the name of our alone Mediator, Jesus Christ, with continual thanksgiving for his benefits.....ecclesiastical discipline according to the pre-script and appointment of God's word"; it is "'catholic' or universal" because it is dispersed throughout the whole world. P ii, p.42.

...to testify and witness how nigh Christ join[s] himself unto us, that he giveth himself whole unto us, and that he will dwell in us, and endow us with all his benefits and riches, so that whatsoever is Christ's, the same is ours.<sup>1</sup>

But he rejects the Zwinglianism of the Short Catechism,<sup>2</sup> for while denying that the Sacraments possess any ex opere operato efficacy, he holds nevertheless that through them we do indeed receive Christ:

...partaking of our Lord Jesus Christ is given to us through the word and the signs instituted for this purpose of God.<sup>3</sup>

He expressly asserts, however, that

...the sacraments by themselves and by their own power do not give grace, nor the Spirit

1. Catechism, pt.V, P.ii, p.201.

2. Sacraments are "certain customable reverent doings and ceremonies ordained by Christ; that by them he might put us in remembrance of his benefits, and we might declare our profession, that we be of the number of them, which are partakers of the same benefits, and which fasten all their affiance in him; that we are not ashamed of the name of Christ, or to be termed Christ's Scholars", Liturgies of Edward VI (PS), p.516.

3. Catechism, P ii, p.199.



of God, neither justify the receiver.<sup>1</sup>

Although to the appointed outward sign there is annexed a promise of grace, the reception of that grace depends entirely upon the faith of the person using the sacrament.<sup>2</sup>

Baptism is twofold, with water and with the Holy Spirit. The former simply testifies to the congregation (that is, the Church in its local manifestation) that the latter has already been received, and that the recipient is regenerate and incorporated into the Body of Christ. Becon appears to hold that the children of believers, like those of the Israelites, receive the Holy Ghost "even in their mother's womb", and having thus been given

1. Catechism, P ii, pp.218-219; of the preface to the folio edition, P i, p.12; Certain Articles of Christian Religion, no.XVI, P iii, p.466; &c.
2. Becon defines faith as a "certain, assured, and an undoubted persuasion of the mind, conceived of the word of God through the operation of the Holy Ghost, concerning the performance and enjoyment of such heavenly things as God hath promised in his holy scriptures to the faithful", Catechism, pt.II, P ii, p.13.

"the best and chiefest baptism", may not be denied the other:

God hath baptized them with the Holy Ghost;  
and shall we disdain to baptize them with  
water ?<sup>1</sup>

Entirely in favour of infant baptism, he denounces the "madness of those apish anabaptists";<sup>2</sup> like the rest of his contemporaries, he is very anxious to clear himself of any suspicion of attachment to the sect which all were united in regarding with abhorrence.<sup>3</sup> He will not refuse the rite to infants who, pleasing God, must of necessity have faith;<sup>4</sup> nor will he allow that lack of outward baptism annuls the election of God — therefore the saying of Jesus: "Except a man be born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God",<sup>5</sup>

1. Catechism, P ii, p.208.

2. ibid, P ii, p.209.

3. ibid, P ii, p.215, &c.

4. ibid, P ii, p.212; Becon proves this by means of the syllogism: Without faith it is impossible to please God (Heb.xi.6) — But children do please God — Therefore children must have faith !

5. Jn.iii.5.

is to be understood only with reference to those who contemptuously refuse the ordinance of Christ.<sup>1</sup> The unworthiness of the minister does not hinder the validity and efficacy of the sacrament,<sup>2</sup> though as we have observed, Becon was not in favour of private baptism,<sup>3</sup> implying as it did the possibility of its administration by women.

Becon naturally rejected the theory of transubstantiation, and devoted many pages to its refutation. Though he affirmed the ubiquity of Christ's spiritual presence, he denied the ubiquity of his glorified Body,<sup>4</sup> and could not accept the Lutheran idea of consubstantiation; moreover, as against Luther, he rejected the view that the ungodly received the Lord's Body and Blood spiritually in the sacrament.<sup>5</sup> The Lord's Supper, he says, was

1. Catechism, P ii, p.224.

2. ibid, P ii, p.226; cf Article XXVII (1553) — XXVI (1563 and 1571).

3. See above, pp.281 and 390.

4. Catechism, P ii, p.272.

5. ibid, P ii, p.291; Luther denied, of course, that the ungodly received the grace of the sacrament.

instituted chiefly and principally to be

...an holy memorial and worthy remembrance of [Christ's] passion and death, of his body-breaking and blood-shedding;

it was also a

...sign and token of the unity and concord, of the hearty good will and singular friendship, and of the perfect agreement in doctrine and religion that ought to be among them that profess Christ,

as well as a means whereby faith is confirmed, the soul nourished, and thanks returned to God for our salvation.<sup>1</sup>

Presumably the offensive preaching against the Sacrament of the altar to which Becon confesses in his first recantation was simply condemnation of transubstantiation. Since the subject is virtually ignored, however, in his 'first period' works, we have no means of ascertaining either his precise views or the direction in which they were developing. Attention may be drawn in passing to

1. ibid, P ii, pp.229-231.

a remarkable passage, the exact import of which is not clear. On his dishes, it will be remembered, Philemon had inscribed Jesus' words recorded in Jn.vi.53b-56; this, he says,

...putteth us in remembrance, when we eat our meat, of the breaking of Christ's most blessed body and the shedding of his most precious blood; and by the remembrance of it, and the believing of the same, our souls at that very present are no less fed and sustained than our bodies are with the meat that is brought unto us in these dishes.<sup>1</sup>

This suggests that at the time when the Banquet was written <sup>Becon</sup> ~~he~~ had adopted the idea that every meal was in some sense a Communion. There is no hint of it in any other work, so that if he did entertain such a view, he quickly abandoned it. It is curious that no retraction of this passage was demanded in 1543.

During the reign of Edward VI Becon seems to have held, so far as we can tell from his writings, a Zwinglian interpretation of the Lord's Supper. In the Flower of Godly Prayers we find these words

1. Christmas Banquet, P i, p.65.



in a prayer to be said before reception:

...as thou didst ennoble the bread with the name of thy body, being but the figure of thy body, because the breaking of thy body should the better be remembered; so likewise here dost thou garnish and nobly set forth the wine, naming it thy blood, when, notwithstanding, it only representeth and preacheth unto us the shedding of thy blood.....  
O most merciful Redeemer and gentle Saviour, we are come together at this present to celebrate the memorial of thy blessed and glorious passion, and to eat and drink this bread and wine in the remembrance of thy body-breaking and blood-shedding....<sup>1</sup>

At the taking of the bread the communicant gives thanks for the sacrifice of the cross,

...in remembrance whereof....I now receive this holy bread....

and at the taking of the cup he prays:

In remembrance of this so noble a victory and of so great a benefit, I am come unto this thy table, O merciful Father, to drink of this cup, desiring thee, that as my outward man is comforted by the drinking of this wine, so likewise my inward man may be comforted and made strong by true faith in the precious blood of thy most dearly[beloved] Son.<sup>2</sup>

1. P iii, p.54.

2. P iii, p.56.

The thanksgiving after reception refers to the Communion as

...a blessed memorial of [Christ's] death and passion, set forth in the holy bread and holy wine, which we at this present have received, both for a remembrance of the breaking of his blessed body and the shedding of his most precious blood, and also for the quietness of our conscience, and for the assurance of the remission of our sins through faith.<sup>1</sup>

A similar view is expressed in other works of this period,<sup>2</sup> and even in the Demands of Holy Scripture, written in 1563,<sup>3</sup> while one passage in the Catechism recalls Zwingli's conception of the elements as signa representativa, though like him it also speaks of a real nourishment of the soul by Christ received through faith: the bread and wine are

...figures, which by Christ's institution be unto the godly receivers thereof sacraments, tokens, significations, and representations of his very flesh and blood; instructing their faith, that as the bread and wine feed

1. P iii, p.55.

2. P iii, p.67, a thanksgiving to God for bringing men out of darkness into the light of the Gospel; the Sick Man's Salve, P iii, p.125; also the Supplication, P iii, pp.230 and 241.

3. P iii, p.617.

them corporally, and continue this temporal life; so the very flesh and blood of Christ feedeth them spiritually, and giveth everlasting life.<sup>1</sup>

This is not, however, the full doctrine of the Catechism, and even in the Edwardine work, The Principles of Christian Religion, Becon seems to speak of a real spiritual eating and drinking which, as he thinks of it, is synchronous with the corporal partaking of the bread and wine. The faithful, he says,

...besides the corporal eating....and outward drinking....do spiritually through faith both eat the body of Christ and drink his blood, unto the confirmation of their faith, the comfort of their conscience, and the salvation of their souls.<sup>2</sup>

In the Demands of Holy Scripture this is stated explicitly:

...even as sure as we take the bread and eat it with the mouth of the body, and drink the wine, so verily and certainly, even at the same instant, with the mouth of our faith, we

1. P ii, pp.283-284.

2. P ii, pp.508-509.

receive the very body and blood of Christ.<sup>1</sup>

And in the Catechism, though less definitely expressed, a similar idea appears:

...Christ is eaten or received two manner of ways; that is to say, sacramentally and spiritually. He is received or eaten sacramentally, when we eat and drink the sacramental bread and wine, according to the institution of Christ; which thing is done not only of the faithful, but also of the unfaithful. He is also eaten or received spiritually, when we believe in Christ, embrace him as our alone Saviour, put our whole hope, trust, and confidence of our redemption and salvation in that one and alone sacrifice, which Christ offered upon the altar of the cross...<sup>2</sup>

Faith is the "mouth of the soul",<sup>3</sup> the organ by means of which Christ is spiritually received; only the faithful, therefore, can partake of him spiritually, though sacramentally both faithful and unbelieving can eat and drink.<sup>4</sup>

1. Part I, P iii, p.612-613.

2. P ii, p.294.

3. P ii, p.295. of the Short Catechism, Liturgies of Edward VI (PS), p.517.

4. of Cranmer, Answer to Gardiner, Works (PS), i, p.213.

From scattered, somewhat imprecise, and even at times contradictory statements such as those given above, it is difficult to formulate any clear doctrine of the Lord's Supper. The evidence, however, suggests that Becon, whatever his views during Henry VIII's reign, adopted at first under Edward a position more or less Zwinglian; and that later he modified his opinions under the influence of the Bucerian conception of the Eucharist<sup>1</sup> to which Cranmer substantially adhered.<sup>2</sup> The Strasbourg reformer taught that

...while the mouth receives the bread and wine, the worthy soul receives and feeds upon the very body and blood of Christ. But in the case of unworthy receivers of the sacrament ....only the bread and wine are received, because the soul from lack of faith cannot receive the body and blood of Christ.<sup>3</sup>

1. See C.H.Smyth, Cranmer and the Reformation under Edward VI, pp. 23-25 (it is now hardly necessary to point out that the term 'Suvermerianism' is misapplied to this doctrine); C.Hopf, Martin Bucer and the English Reformation, pp.41-51 (on 'Suvermerianism', see pp.35-40).
2. Smyth, op.cit., ch.2, and esp. pp.63-72.
3. ibid, p.24.



Into this theory Cranmer introduced a modification; he held that the body of Christ is present,

...not in the sacraments, but in the administration of the sacraments, and is spiritually received by all who receive him worthily, that is, by those in whom Christ is already spiritually present.<sup>1</sup>

Between Bucer's conception and that of Becon as expressed in the passages cited from The Demands of Holy Scripture and the Catechism, an affinity will immediately be apparent. But we cannot assume that Becon had actually adopted the Bucerian view of the Eucharist, and there is no trace in his writings of Cranmer's own particular theory of dynamic-receptionism.<sup>2</sup> All that can safely be stated is that on his return from exile Becon is to be found teaching something at least basically similar to the via media doctrine of the Lord's Supper advocated by Bucer before the latter de-

1. ibid, p.66.

2. For a discussion of Cranmer's conception, see G.B.Timms's article Dixit Cranmer, in the Church Quarterly Review, 1947, nos.286 and 287.

veloped Zwinglian tendencies under the influence of Peter Martyr. There is nothing in his works to indicate whether or not he would have moved, had he lived, in the direction of Calvinism in his Eucharistic thought, but such a possibility is not wholly out of the question.

## II

Becon's treatment of marriage falls into three distinct parts. Like the rest of the reformers, he deals at inordinate length with compulsory celibacy, and with the abuses and immorality which it occasioned among clergy, monks and nuns, illustrating his theme with racy but unedifying instances of mediaeval licentiousness. Not only here, but in his other works, whenever an opportunity, suitable or not, presents itself, he takes great delight in vilifying the priests by attributing to them the practice of every kind of sexual immorality and perversion. Not content with examples from the past, he regales his readers with the story of a contemporary 'Nicolaitan' (a certain "Lob Lout"

named Nicols !), his wife, and the priest.<sup>1</sup> This aspect of Becon's writings need not detain us; like his condemnation of the traditional sacramental view of marriage, its aim is solely polemical. It suited his purpose to vituperate the catholic clergy and to paint them as libertines, and the slander is too impudent and barefaced to need refutation. That there were abuses and immorality cannot be denied; but Becon's sweeping denunciation of the priests as "whoremongers", for instance, is grossly unfair — especially when applied to the legitimized co-habitations which were often in all but their regularity true marriages.<sup>2</sup>

Becon also treats at length of the respective duties and obligations of husband and wife, taking as his starting point the relevant parts of the 'social codes' in the Ephesian, Colossian, Pastoral, and First Petrine Epistles,<sup>3</sup> and making use of appropriate exempla from the Old Testament. These

1. Book of Matrimony, F i, fol.cccclxxiiii retro.

2. cf Zwingli's 'marriage', Lindsay, History of the Reformation, ii, pp.36-37.

3. See E.G.Selwyn, The First Epistle of St.Peter, pp.419 ff.

exhortations to the married are formal in character and thoroughly conventional, entirely androcentric, and based upon a one-sided interpretation of the Pauline doctrine of subordination. The woman is the inferior, and should in all things submit to her husband and be ruled and governed by him,<sup>1</sup> bearing patiently with his faults and incommodities.<sup>2</sup> But Becon does not condone the latter; he denounces the

...currish and doggish behaviour of some loose-bands, rather than husbands...<sup>3</sup>

who forget that

...their wives be no dish-clouts, nor no hand-basket-sloys, nor no drudges, nor yet slavish people, but fellow-heirs with them of everlasting life,

and, moreover, often so wise and prudent that in daily affairs they can

...many times...give better counsel than men,

1. Catechism, pt.VI, P ii, p.340.

2. ibid, P ii, p.343.

3. ibid, P ii, p.338.

and are able to determine what is good and what is otherwise, no less than their husbands.<sup>1</sup>

And in the Book of Matrimony he sets against the traditional view of woman, still at that time extensively current despite the leavening influence of romantic thought, the assertion that

...the blessed trinitie is the creatour and maker no les of the woman, than of the man: whereby it is geuen us to vnderstande, that the woman is before God of no less price and dignitie, then man is, so that they which so contemptuously and so despitefully either write or speak of the feminine kind, do great dishonour to God.<sup>2</sup>

But the most important and interesting parts of the Book of Matrimony are those in which Becon deals with the theological aspect of the marriage union. This composition is not, however, a systematic treatise upon the subject, for it has both a polemical and a hortatory purpose — and in regard to the latter, it must not be forgotten that the

1. ibid, P ii, p.339.

2. F i, fol.cccclxix retro.



book was written for and dedicated to Thomas Wotton, and treats of the duties and practical problems of married life principally from the husband's standpoint. Nor does it lack a certain inconsistency, a characteristic of the matrimonial treatises of most of the Reformation and Caroline divines. At one moment Becon is the theologian expounding a conventional view of sexual relation and marriage,<sup>1</sup> while at another he is the husband and father, drawing upon a rich experience of married and family life.

For Becon marriage is a divine vocation, the origin of which lies, not in social convenience or necessity, but in the will of God who first instituted it. Men and women are drawn together "by a certain inspiration of the Holy Ghost",<sup>2</sup> by whom love is grafted in the heart.<sup>3</sup> Godly marriage is

1. Despite the many and great changes introduced by the reformers into the concept of Christian marriage, it is sometimes overlooked that protestantism took over, and even intensified, certain traditional views of sexual relation.
2. Preface, Book of Matrimony, F i, fol.cccclxii verso (Christian State of Matrimony, A iii verso).
3. Catechism, P ii, p.341

not

...brought to passe by fortune or by chaunce,  
but by the singular providence: determinacion:  
council: wysedom: and tofore appoyntmente of  
God: according to this our common prouerbe.  
Matrimony is destinye.<sup>1</sup>

It excells every other state in life,<sup>2</sup> a conviction which Becon defends with great vigour and enthusiasm. Here he is one of a minority of extremists among the reformers, for most of them were prepared to accord voluntary virginity a place above, or at least on a level with, marriage,<sup>3</sup> and on the strength of St. Paul's preference conceded that in certain cases it could have real value. Becon, too, would not deprive of their Christian liberty those

1. Book of Matrimony, F i, fol.cccclxix retro.
2. ibid, fol.Dcxvi verso; cf preface (Book of Matrimony, F i, fol.cccclxii retro; Christian State of Matrimony, fol. A ii retro - A iv retro).
3. See, e.g., Hutchinson, The Image of God, xxv, (Works [PS], p.148); Latimer, Sermons (PS), p. 394; Fulke, Defence of the English Translation of the Bible, xvi, § 1, Works (PS), p.492; Stapleton's Fortress Overthrown, II, Answers (PS), p.99.

who possess the gift of continency and elect to remain celibate;<sup>1</sup> but he would hold that in the exercise of their choice they had rejected the higher state, and had preferred the lower.

For the three bona matrimonii of the Augustinian-Thomist theory of marriage — offspring, faith, and sacrament — the English reformers substituted the three "causes for which matrimony was ordained", which are enumerated in the Prayer Book — procreation, a remedy against sin, and mutual society, help, and comfort. There is no general agreement, however, as to the order of importance in which these causes should be placed, and the Prayer Book order is the least common; during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries it occurs principally in the abortive Reformatio Legum Ecclesiasticarum.<sup>2</sup> While Tyndale, among the reformers, reversed the Prayer Book order,<sup>3</sup> the majority (if they

1. Catechism, pt.III, P ii, p.103.

2. de matrimonia, cap.i, Cardwell's edition, p.39.

3. The Obedience of a Christian Man, Works (PS), i, p.254.

discuss the matter) favour the following: society, procreation, remedy. Hooper may well imply this order;<sup>1</sup> Bucer would have preferred it;<sup>2</sup> and Sandys assumed it in a wedding sermon preached at Strasbourg.<sup>3</sup> Becon, who may have been present when it was delivered, also enumerates the causes in this order. Marriage, he says, was ordained for comfort and companionship;<sup>4</sup> for procreation;<sup>5</sup> and for the avoidance of fornication, adultery, incest, sodomitry, and the like:<sup>6</sup>

1. "Matrimony is a lawful conjunction of man and woman to be one flesh, to bring forth children, either to avoid fornication", A Declaration of the Ten Commandments, x, Works (PS), i, p.381. It is unlikely that the reference to 'one flesh' here has any reference to the primacy of the unitive end of marriage.
2. See Hopf, op.cit., p.72; also Cosin, in Notes on the Book of Common Prayer, series III, Works (Library of Anglo-Catholic Theology), v, p.492.
3. Sermon xvi, Works (PS), p.315. cf also the Homily, Of the State of Matrimony, Homilies, p. 534, where the order is the same.
4. Book of Matrimony, F i, fol. Dcxlviij retro ff.
5. ibid, F i, fol. Dcl verso ff.
6. ibid, F i, fol. Dcliv verso ff.

Matrimony is Gods holy ordinaunce appoynted for appeasing and quenching the inordinate lustes and carnal concupiscences of the hart, that it may be pure and clene before God....<sup>1</sup>

Thus he agrees with most of the English reformers in holding the third cause in the Prayer Book (mutual society, help, and comfort) to be properly the principal cause. Whether or not this view implied that he or any of the others regarded as primary the unitive end of marriage,<sup>2</sup> that is, the establishment of a permanent and indissoluble 'one flesh' henosis, it is impossible to say, but on historical grounds unlikely.

Becon certainly understands the profound psychical and metaphysical consequences of sexual intercourse, but this leads him to the conclusion that adultery must effect the dissolution of a marriage. The adulteress

1. ibid, fol. Dclv verso.

2. See my essay on Clerical Marriage in Theology Occasional Paper, New Series, No 7: Celibacy and Marriage, pp.35-36.



...ceaseth nowe to bee hys [the husband's] wyfe... Matrimony abideth so long perfect and safe betwene the maryed couple, as it is not vyolate and broken thorowe the sinne of adulterye.<sup>1</sup>

Yet he lacks the consistency of Hooper, who considered that adultery so dissolved a marriage as to make reinstatement of the offending partner impossible even after repentance.<sup>2</sup> Holding as he does that a 'one flesh' union established between husband and wife by sexual intercourse endured<sup>s</sup> only until another such union, contracted in adultery between one of them and a third person, supervenes and so cancels the first, Becon yet pleads for reconciliation and reunion wherever possible.<sup>3</sup> In permitting divorce in the event of adultery alone, he adopts a more conservative view than that held by several of his protestant contemporaries, and

1. Book of Matrimony, F i, fol. Dcxxvi verso.
2. A Declaration of the Ten Commandments, x, Works (PS), i, p.384; cf ii, p.xxiii and Orig. Let. p.416.
3. Book of Matrimony, F i, fol.Dcxlili verso.

embodied in the Reformatio Legum Ecclesiasticarum.<sup>1</sup> Like them, however, he would allow the remarriage of a guiltless person lawfully divorced.<sup>2</sup> His authority throughout, of course, is the traditional exegesis of Matt.xix.9.<sup>3</sup>

Occasionally the husband and father forgets that he is a theologian, as in the following passage, where Becon breaks out into an encomium upon married life, and descants upon the theme, "Matrimoni all loue":<sup>4</sup>

The wiues loue is with no falsity corrupted, with no simulation absured, with no chaūce of things minished. Finally with death only (nay not with death neither) withdrawn. She, the loue of her parents: she, the loue of her sisters: she, the loue of her brethren despiseth for the loue of you: her only respect is to you: of you she hangeth: with you she coueteth to die. Haue ye richesse. There is one

1. de adulteriis et divortiis, cap.6,9,11 of 10; cf also Tyndale, Exposition of Matt.v,vi and vii, on v.31-32, Works (PS), ii, p.55.
2. Book of Matrimony, F i, fol.Dcxxviii verso; Acts of Christ and Antichrist, (of their Doctrine), P iii, p.532.
3. Book of Matrimony, F i, fol.Dcxlvi verso.
4. It should not be forgotten that Becon is here reminding a husband of the blessings of marriage and a good wife.

that shal saue it: there is one that shal encrease it. Haue ye none: there is one that may seke it: if ye haue wealth, your felicity is doubled. If aduersity, there shalbe one, which may comfort you, which may sit by your side, which may serue you, which may couet your grefe to be hers. Do ye iudge any pleasure to be compared with this so great a coniunction: If ye tary at home, there is at hand, which shal driue away the tediousness of solitarie being. If from home, ye haue one that shall kisse you, when ye depart: long for you, when ye be absent, receiue you ioyfully, when ye returne. A swete companion of youth, a kind solace of age....

And to all this is added the blessing of children:

Now sir, how highlye will ye esteme this thing, when your fair wife shal make you a father to a fair childe: when some litle yong babe shall play in your haull, which shall resemble you and your wife: which with a milde lisping, or amiable stammering shal call you Dad.....<sup>1</sup>

Here, in the words of one of the first of the English clergy to judge that marriage would serve better to godliness, we catch a glimpse of the spirit which has animated countless parsonages — that ideal of Christian wedlock which has been, and still is, Anglicanism's characteristic vindication

1. Book of Matrimony, F i, fol.Dcl.

of a married clergy. In his understanding of and insight into marriage Becon is notable among the English reformers, and it is all the more regrettable that we know so little about his own marriage and family life. Something of its quality, however, must surely be enshrined in this and other passages in his works where he writes so highly and sympathetically of the married state.

### III

From the foregoing chapters it will be clear that Becon was not a theologian of outstanding ability, nor yet a great leader of men. Neither his gifts nor his inclinations fitted him for those parts. On no subject, with the possible exception of marriage, does he display marked originality or power of constructive thought, nor is he much concerned with philosophical or metaphysical subtleties and speculation. To the great controversies of his day — those which centred around the Lord's Supper and justification — he contributed nothing of notable value, but simply accepted the views of those with whom he made

common cause, and expounded them along conventional lines. In neither events nor formularies is any certain evidence of his hand or his influence to be seen. And yet he was a man, as his biography shows, of some consequence — and no review of his life and its significance is complete which takes no account of his comparatively early death; though it would be unprofitable to speculate whether the Canon of fifty-five would have attained in, say, ten year's time to the dignity of the episcopate. Wherein, then, does his importance lie ?

The story which has now been told confirms the opinion expressed in the preface that Thomas Becon must be regarded as notable among the reformers of England for his work as a tract writer and propagandist. It is obviously difficult to bring positive proof in support of such a view, for by what means can the real power and effect of the printed and spoken word be accurately gauged ? If the opposition which his works provoked, and the ultimate success of the movement whose principles he so strenuously advocated, are any measure of the power of his pen, then, intangible though Becon's



contribution was to the triumph of the Reformation in England, it can by no means be dismissed as negligible. Not only was he one of the most voluminous of the English divines who wrote in its support, but judging by the extra editions into which many of his works passed, he was one of the most popular. And if we enquire the reason for the effectiveness of his writings, we shall find that it was because, in some degree at least, they possessed the qualities of their defects.

Becon's compositions are not, and were not intended to be, theological treatises. He lacked, as we have remarked, the qualities of a great theologian, and his interest seems to have been chiefly in popular exposition and apologetic. But as tracts for the times most of the products of his pen are admirable. They are simple and homely in language, pointed with numerous proverbial sayings, clear in statement and arrangement, illustrated with effective exempla, and occasionally colloquial in idiom. While eschewing, as a general rule, discussion of fine points of doctrine and exegesis, and relying upon direct and sometimes arresting assertions of

protestant faith and teaching, Becon nevertheless amply furnishes his readers with the sort of arguments likely to be of greatest use to them — arguments against the Mass and transubstantiation, against the papal claims and jurisdiction, against superstitions, clerical celibacy, and so forth. He provides ammunition in abundance for the ordinary protestant to fire at his Papist or temporizing neighbours, and reasons enough to confirm the wavering and doubtful, and to encourage those already convinced. Not the least striking feature of his method is his continual use of scripture. Page after page abounds in quotation and allusion, all skilfully woven into the argument. This had a double purpose; not only did it guarantee the necessary scriptural sanction for his teaching but, as suggested before, it also served to familiarize the reader with the Bible and its contents, particularly when in the later years of Henry VIII's reign the reading of it was prohibited to all but a few. Becon employs scripture almost to a greater extent than any other English writer of the time, and when it serves his purpose, does not hesitate to draw

upon the Apocrypha as well as upon the two Testaments. An analysis of his use of the Bible will be found in Detached Note G. From this it will be seen that in the course of three specimen works, selected at random from three different periods and including one of his favourite collections of 'pro-bations', he has laid under contribution, with three exceptions, every book in the Bible, and sometimes every chapter in a book. This could probably be paralleled from contemporary writers, but the tables in the Note are sufficient to show how extensively Becon made use of the scriptures. The citations are not, of course, evenly distributed, and the comparatively restricted range of the subject-matter inevitably means that certain texts appear over and over again, but the tables only indicate the number of different citations from each book. And if, finally, it has to be admitted that perhaps not the least of the factors making for the popularity of Becon's books were his outbursts of coarse vituperation, and his command of all the alliterative and other devices of vulgar and abusive polemic, it has also to be allowed that

in this respect he was not alone or even pre-eminent in his age. Regrettable though some of his language is, it is moderate when compared with the worst of Bale, and he rarely sunk to the level of the Supplication or the Displaying of the Popish Mass.

Here then, in his ability and power as a propagandist, we may surely see Becon's greatest importance in the progress and success of the Reformation in England. But there are other respects in which he is deserving of recognition and remembrance. Not least of these is his undoubted influence upon English protestant piety. Through most of his best works there runs a note of genuine and deep personal devotion, tinged, it is true, with something of a puritanical severity and over-confidence of election and predestination to salvation. It is not surprizing that so many of his prayers found a place in the Primer of 1553. They show little liturgical sense, and nothing of that beauty and felicity of phrase and structure which he must often have admired in the work of his master and patron Thomas Cranmer, but they have a sincerity and

directness which lends them a distinctive character. They must have been extensively used, and were no doubt as popular as some of the devotional works — and especially the Sick Man's Salve, which, from its frequent reprinting, evidently had a wide circulation. Although Becon's conception of prayer is dominated by petition to the virtual exclusion of its other aspects,<sup>1</sup> the treatise, The Pathway unto Prayer, and the relevant section of the New Catechism contain much admirable matter written in a spirit of true understanding, and testify to a real experience of communion with God and an appreciation of the fundamental place of prayer in the Christian life. It is the more regrettable that into these devotional works, and even into the prayers themselves, the old prejudices and antipath-

1. of the definition in the Catechism: "Prayer is a lifting up of a pure mind unto God, in the which we ask somewhat of him, according to his will... an earnest talk with God, proceeding from a very inward, deep, and burning or fervent affection of the heart, craving somewhat at the hand of God, .....a mourning, or a longing and a desire, of the spirit to God-ward, for that which she lacketh....." (P ii, p.125), all of which are expounded in terms of petition.



ies intrude, and at any moment the Mass, the Pope, priests, purgatory, or some other King Charles's head may appear, introducing a discordant and not infrequently vindictive note which is most inappropriate. Needless to say, the Supplication, that deplorable exhibition, ought not to be reckoned among Becon's devotional writings.

Becon has a value, too, for the historiographer. His works, as we have discovered, are a mine of information concerning the social and economic conditions of his time, and still more, popular protestant opinion in England. If he wrote for the humbler supporters of the Reformation, he also reflected their views. In book after book we hear the echoes, not of debates in Convocation but of sermons at Paul's Cross and other well-frequented preaching places, not of theological discussion at the table of some prelate or Doctor, but of earnest talk and careful searchings of the scriptures as friends gather round the fireside or walk in the garden.

Most interesting of all, neither in his life

nor in his works do we find the consistency in thought and action of one whose mind is completely made up; who has carefully worked out all his conclusions and stands secure, fortified by his own logic, in a position whence neither argument nor doubt nor persecution can dislodge him. Of some, like Hooper and Latimer, this could be said — but not of Becon. He was sensitive to the perplexities of his age; he knew clearly enough on which side he stood — but exactly where on that side, he was never entirely sure. And in his uncertainty he reflects the uncertainty of many, perhaps of most of his contemporaries; in him is mirrored the ordinary educated protestant Englishman with his natural hesitancy in the face of great and rapid change, seeking instinctively for a via media between conflicting theories and rival claims upon his allegiance.

In this typical character Becon gains a new importance. Strongly influenced by Lutheran teaching in early manhood, and later on, during Edward's reign, by Zwinglianism, he never wholly embraced either system, and like many more, his roots struck

deeper than he realized into the old traditions and ways. In his exaltation of the "powers that be" he is the thorough Erastian, yet he cannot deny that the Norfolk rebels have a case and a claim upon his sympathy, despite the sinfulness of riot and civil commotion, and he fully countenances the idea that when the 'power' is a woman and a Romanist, there is a limit to the obedience of the subject. He is one of the few Englishmen to express a decided preference for sitting at the Communion, yet he holds that ceremonies in themselves are adiaphora; he is found with Cox at Frankfort when we might have expected to meet him in the ranks of the Knoxians; he moves and petitions in Convocation against vestments, yet in his cathedral at Canterbury he conforms to the local use of surplice and cope; he refuses to submit at Grindal's visitation, yet afterwards subscribes.

All this might, on a superficial view, be ascribed to vacillation and cowardice, as Jacobs does his recantations and changes of opinion. Is it not rather, however, evidence of perplexity in the face of divergent ideas and claims — of a deter-

mination, on the one hand, not to yield an inch in matters of principle, and of a readiness, on the other, to make concessions in things indifferent, in obedience to an instinctive and characteristically English desire to discover, if possible, the via media between conflicting extremes? This appears very clearly in Becon's attitude to the Lord's Supper. At first, no doubt, essentially Lutheran in his views (for his assertion in the second recantation respecting the sacrifice of the Mass may be ignored), he gravitated towards Zwinglianism for a time, but eventually adopted what seems to have been in effect the Bucerian, Cranmerian compromise. It is not unlikely that in other matters also he sought to avoid an extreme position, and sometimes in the process found himself uncertain where to take his stand. He himself emphasizes the debt which he owed to Stafford and Latimer, but I would suggest that the governing influence in his middle and later years was that of Cranmer, whose chaplain he had been, whose memory he revered, and whose ideals and principles he understood and took as his guide, both in exile and on his return to

England. Impetuous and easily led, however, Becon sometimes found the middle way difficult not only to tread but even to discover. Loyalty to the aims of his late master and patron not infrequently conflicted with a temperamental disposition to favour advanced views, and here, undoubtedly, must be sought the explanation of the inconsistencies and uncertainties of his last ten years.

By those historians of the Reformation who have noticed him, Becon has generally been numbered among the puritans — doubtless on the strength of his views on kneeling, his nonconformist tendencies (as seen at the 1562-3 Convocation and at Grindal's visitation), and the character of some of his works (notably those of a devotional nature). And in his rigorist attitude to life and his severe piety there is indeed not a little that savours of the puritanical, particularly in the sense in which the word came afterwards to be used. Many features of extreme protestantism seem to have been congenial to him. But it is clear that he was not, strictly speaking, one of the early puritans; he was, for one thing, too moderate and adiaphoristic where



gestures, ceremonies, and vestments were concerned. Party divisions at that time were not clear-cut, and the precise position of the more moderate men is sometimes impossible to define. Although superficially Becon had distinct affinities with the advanced or puritan element in the English Church, no careful estimate of his life and works admits of his being set down as a thorough-going puritan. Whether, had he lived, he would have thrown in his lot with the advanced party, it is profitless to speculate.

## CHAPTER 9

## THOMAS BECON THE WRITER

## I

This study would be incomplete without a brief reference to Thomas Becon's literary aims and characteristics. Of the former he himself writes in the preface to the folio edition of his works:

...in all my sermons and writings I have not attempted matters of high knowledge and far removed from the common sense and capacity of the people, but I have been content at all times to handle such matters as might rather edify the brethren, than to drive them into an admiration or stupor at the doctrine of so rare, unwonted, high, and unsearchable mysteries, and as might most make unto the advancement of virtue and unto the repression of vice.....

To teach the people to know themselves and their salvation in the blood of Christ through faith, and to walk worthy of the kindness of God, leading a life agreeable to the same, hath only been the stop and mark whereunto I have directed all my studies and travails both in preaching and in writing.<sup>1</sup>

With his remarks on the spirit in which he conducted

1. P i, pp.27-28.

controversy and treated opponents it is impossible to agree:

I have sought in all my doings to offend none, but to please the godly. And therefore have I ever used a temperate, moderate, and quiet kind, both of preaching and of writing, that by this means I might win some and lose as few as I might.<sup>1</sup>

....I have not so dealt with the adversaries of God's true religion in any of my books, that I have at any time forgotten christian modesty, or passed the bounds of friendly peace. I have fought not with the men (whose salvation in the blood of Christ I wish no less than mine own), but with their errors and wicked doctrines, which they stoutly, yea, with tooth and nail, as they use to say, defend against the true doctrine of our Saviour Christ, and against the use, practice, and teaching of the ancient fathers of Christ's church....<sup>2</sup>

...whatsoever I have written against the doctrine of antichrist in this third volume,<sup>3</sup> I have not done it with uncharitable railings, cruel words, fiery invectives, taunting terms, unsavoury scoffings, uncomely jestings, &c., but with the authority of the holy scriptures, and with the testimonies of the godly ancient fathers, seeking all means possible to edify and not to destroy, to please and not to displease....<sup>4</sup>

1. P i, p.28.

2. P i, p.29.

3. that is, of the Collected Works.

4. P i, p.30.

Upon so perverse an estimation of his own charity and good taste the best commentary is provided by such works as the Supplication and the Displaying of the Popish Mass, and by the numerous passages of irreverence, vulgar abuse and bitter invective in which his writings abound.

To great industry in composition Becon added a remarkable facility in expression and an intimate knowledge of the Bible. Although frequently marred by latinisms, especially in the early works, his style is generally fresh and vigorous, and at times exuberantly rhetorical. He is without doubt one of the most attractive and even entertaining writers among the English reformers. Like Latimer, whose preaching he greatly admired, he is homely and sometimes colloquial, and popular idioms and proverbial expressions impart to his later compositions a telling and original flavour. More than any others among his contemporaries, he favoured the dialogue form for the purposes of religious propaganda and instruction, and the conversations between the four friends and neighbours are both natural and spirited.

Becon's writings are enlivened by many flashes of broad and sometimes vulgar humour, as well as by puns and alliteration in abundance. He is very partial to witticisms of the following kind:

...these works they call Opera supererogationis: they might more justly call them Opera superarrogantiae.<sup>1</sup>

...a council at Rome, called Latronense (I would say, Lateranense concilium).....<sup>2</sup>

...saints' lies (lives I should say) out of Legenda aurea.....<sup>3</sup>

...his painted carnal idols, I would have said, his sainted cardinals.....<sup>4</sup>

Ye object and lay against me the thief.  
Very thievishly done !<sup>5</sup>

to alliterative abuse (of which other examples have already been given):

Ye are like those lewd lawyers, subtile

1. P ii, p.178; cf P iii, p.200.

2. P iii, p.274.

3. P iii, p.535.

4. P i, p.294.

5. P i, p.341.



scribes, boisterous bishops, saucy Sadducees, fine Pharisees, prattling priests, and hollow hypocrites, against whom our Saviour Christ thundered.....<sup>1</sup>

and to punning invective:

These imposters rather than pastors, ministers more truly than ministers, gelders rather than elders, dissipators rather than dispensators, corrupters rather than correctors, destructors rather than instructors, de-formers rather than informers.....are to be repelled and put back from the cure and oversight of Christ's flock.....<sup>2</sup>

And when he describes the priest's silent commemoration of the departed at the Memento in the Mass, he has an opportunity which gives him full scope for his facetious propensities:

And here in your mind and thought (for now ye play mum-budget and silence-glum) ye pray for Philip and Cheny, more than a good meany, for the souls of your great grand Sir and of your old beldam Hurre, for the souls of father Princharde and of mother Puddingwright, for the souls of good-man Rinsepitcher and good-wife Pintpot, for the souls of sir John Husle-goose and sir Simon Sweetlips.....<sup>3</sup>

1. P iii, p.261.

2. P i, p.6.

3. P iii, p.276.

Proverbs and proverbial sayings plentifully besprinkle his pages; some have survived and are still in common use, but the majority are now obsolete. A few of the more interesting ones are given below:

As soon to the market for to be sold  
Cometh the young sheep as the old.<sup>1</sup>

Little wot the full sow, that is in the sty,  
What the hungry sow aileth, that goeth by.<sup>2</sup>

It is merry in hall  
When beards wag all.<sup>3</sup>

As riseth my good,  
So riseth my blood.<sup>4</sup>

Every man before he dieth shall see the devil.<sup>5</sup>

Like will to like, quod the devil, when he  
danced with the collier.<sup>6</sup>

Wherever God buildeth his church, there the  
devil also buildeth his chapel.<sup>7</sup>

1. P iii, p.118

2. P ii, p.583.

3. P iii, p.583.

4. P ii, p.599.

5. P ii, p.624.

6. P iii, p.383; cf P i, p.132.

7. P iii, p.400.

Summa Dei pietas veniam non dimidiabit:  
Aut nihil, aut totum, te poenitente dabit.<sup>1</sup>

Da tua, dum tua sunt: post mortem tunc tua  
non sunt.<sup>2</sup>

Quod sibi quisque serit praesentis tempore  
vitae,  
Hoc sibi messis erit, cum dicitur, Ite,  
venite.<sup>3</sup>

Some of the sayings are quite obscure, but it is  
generally possible to guess at their meaning:

of women who will not stay at home, but go abroad  
seeking pleasure —

Their house is a wild cat. They shall easily  
find it again at their return. Set cock  
on the hoop. Let the devil pay the maltman.<sup>4</sup>

of the priest's manual actions at the celebration

1. P ii, p.174.

2. P ii, p.393; P iii, p.128.

3. *ibid.* These lines seem to have been taught to  
children in school (see P iii, p.128), and  
were doubtless familiar to Becon as a teacher.  
The reference of "Ite, venite" is to Matt.xxv.  
34 and 41.

4. P ii, p.343; P iii, p.282. See Oxford English  
Dictionary s.v "wild-cat"; "cock-on-the-hoop";  
"maltman".

of the Mass —

...play cole under candlestick.....whip  
master Wynchard above the board.<sup>1</sup>

of the elevation of the host —

...behold the apple-maker of Kent, and mark  
well him that killed thy father.<sup>2</sup>

of processions out of doors —

...running one after another about the church-  
yard, like the prior of Pricklingham and his  
convent.<sup>3</sup>

Two more specimens may be given:

...here is the door, and there is the way,  
farewell, gentle Geffrey.<sup>4</sup>

...as the porters cry in Sturbridge fair, A  
new master, a new, and hang up the old.....<sup>5</sup>

1. P iii, p.260 — the phrase seems to denote sec-  
recy, and may have some reference to conjuring  
tricks.
2. P iii, p.267.
3. P iii, p.281.
4. P iii, p.534.
5. ibid.

Such phrases, probably derived from popular witticisms, interludes,<sup>1</sup> ballads, vulgar or obscene jokes, and the like, of which no trace now remains, show how closely Becon kept in touch with the ordinary man of his day, and explain the ready appeal of his works.

## II

Like many of his contemporaries, Becon tried his hand at writing religious verse, but with conspicuous lack of success. He seems to have realized his want of ear and technical skill, for the prelude to the lost Catechism in metre addresses the reader:

Though I be without eloquence,  
Rude and barbarous to behold,<sup>2</sup>

and he desisted from this form of composition

1. "Hickscorner", to whom Becon makes several references (P iii, pp.259, 279, 361), was a character in an allegorical interlude of the same title by Wynkyn de Worde, and denoted a travelled libertine who scoffs at religion.
2. P ii, p.3.



after his return from exile. Specimens of his verse are to be found in the Parker Society's edition of his works, and I give below an example from the Dialogue between the Angel and the Shepherds, from which the reader will easily be able to judge its quality.

Shepherds:

O Lorde God, what worke haue we here ?  
 What meaneth this meruelous great lighte  
 The Element was neuer so clere  
 That euer we sawe in any nyghte.

Good Lorde saue vs and all our shepe.  
 That none of vs perishe at all,  
 Gyue vs grace euer well to kepe  
 That we haue charge of both great and smal.

¶ From the wolffe that rauening beaste  
 Defende our shepe, Lorde we praye the  
 And gyue vs all this nyghte good reaste  
 For of this lyght sore afrayde are we.

Angel:

Be not afrayde  
 Nor yet dismayde  
 Nothing decayde  
 Shall be in you,  
 Your shepe harmeless  
 Shall be certes  
 Therefore distres  
 Look ye exchewe  
 To comforte you  
 With tidynges newe  
 Whiche shall ensue  
 I am nowe come;

Gods messengere  
 Both farre & nere  
 To you nowe here  
 Am I come downe.  
     Myrth and pleasaunce  
 Texchewe greuance  
 Is my portauce  
 That I nowe brynge,  
 Your hartes therfore  
 Haue ye in store  
 And euermore  
 Marke my sayinge.<sup>1</sup>

Commendatory lines prefixed to John Studley's translation of Seneca's Agamemnon and Medea and signed T.B. have generally been attributed to Thomas Becon.<sup>2</sup> Comparison with the verse which came from his pen, however, shows that these anonymous lines cannot have been his; a brief quotation from the opening will suffice to make this clear:

When Heiwood did in perfect verse  
     and dolfull tune set out,  
 And by hys smouth and fyled style  
     declared had aboute,  
 What roughe reproche the Troyans of  
     the hardy Grekes receyued,  
 When they of towne, of goods, & lyues  
     together were depryued.

1. F ii, fol.cclxxxiiii verso.

2. Bib. I, B 2.

How wel did then hys freindes requite  
 his trauayle and hys paine,  
 When vnto hym they haue (as due)  
 ten thousand thankes gayne ?<sup>1</sup>

After the fashion of the time, Becon also wrote Latin verse, and his commendatory lines in Turner's Triacle are given in <sup>an</sup> Appendix F, since they are not easily met with, and are not included in either the folio or the Parker Society editions of the works.

1. See E.M. Spearing's edition of Studley's Seneca's Agamemnon and Medea, Louvain, 1913, p.16.

## CHAPTER 10

## THE MAN AND HIS FAMILY

## I

Thomas Becon's contemporaries are warm in their praises of his learning, industry, and influence as a writer, but of the man — of his character, appearance, and manner — they tell us nothing.<sup>1</sup> Two portraits, it is true, survive, and help to confirm in some measure the impression gained from his works and from the part which he took in affairs. Certain features have already been noticed in the course of this study — for instance, the tendency to self-importance, conspicuous in the second recantation, and the indecision due not to weakness or vacillation, but to perplexity in the face of conflicting claims and theories, and to anxiety to discover some via media. His works re-

1. See the commendatory verses by Parkhurst, Calphill, and Bomelius, prefixed to the folio edition and reproduced, P i, p.33.

flect an earnest and severe piety, tempered by a strong but somewhat rudimentary sense of humour, and an enthusiastic, perhaps impulsive, temperament. Of personal traits, however, they disclose little, apart from something of a distaste for music, of which he says that it is

...a more vain and trifling science than it becometh a man, born and appointed to matters of gravity, to spend much time about it....<sup>1</sup>

Vain and transitory it is indeed: notwithstanding, music may be used, so it be not abused. If it be soberly exercised and reputed as an handmaid unto virtue, it is tolerable; otherwise it is execrable, and to be abhorred of all good men. So that ye perceive, that music is not so excellent a thing, that a christian man ought earnestly to rejoice in it.<sup>2</sup>

Several times Becon mentions serious indispositions, and the portrait of 1560 is that of a sick man.<sup>3</sup> He was probably not constitutionally strong, and may have suffered from long periods of ill health,

1. Jewel of Joy, P ii, p.429.

2. ibid, P ii, p.430.

3. It will be recalled that in the Book of Matrimony, written at that time, he refers to a long illness, see above, pp.370 and 401.



due perhaps to some disease which was responsible for his comparatively early death. The motto, vive memor lethi, suggests that he may himself have been aware of his delicate condition. Incapacitated or hindered by illness though he was at times,<sup>1</sup> his great output bears testimony to an unflagging application to the work to which he believed he had been called; always he seems to have kept before him as a guiding principle the Lord's words: "Occupy till I come".<sup>2</sup>

## II

Among the traits revealed by Becon's works we have observed a lively appreciation of the blessings of marriage and domestic life which makes us wish we knew something of his own family circle, and particularly of her with whom he set out to realize the ideal which he expounds in the Book of Matrimony. He probably married very soon after the

1. See his letter to Parker, above, p.402.

2. See, e.g., the preface to the collected works, P i, p.1.

legalization of clerical marriage in 1549;<sup>1</sup> no register entry, however, can be found to confirm this,<sup>2</sup> and Becon himself tells us nothing.

He twice mentions his children. The New Catechism is dedicated to Theodore, Basil, and Rachel, and in the preface he refers to Theodore and Christophile, "which now rest in glory with our head Christ".<sup>3</sup> And in the Sick Man's Salve<sup>4</sup> he says,

1. 2 & 3 Edward VI cap.21 — see Gee and Hardy, Documents, pp.366 ff.
2. Boyd's Marriage Index, in the possession of the Society of Genealogists, contains no reference to Thomas Becon. A marriage took place, however, in the church of St.Mildred Poultry on 12 January 1548-9 between "Thomas Bacon and Cisly Wherey" (sic). The register (now preserved in St.Margaret's Lothbury) clearly shows the name as "Bacon"; the entry, however, is only a copy made late in 1598 and certified by the parson and churchwardens on 23 April 1599 [I am indebted for this information to the Bishop of Stepney]. It is just possible, therefore, that an error occurred in transcription, and that the original entry really related to Becon, whose name, incidentally, is spelt "Bacon" by Knox, see above, p.289, n.1. On the other hand, the London church registers of the period contain other entries for Bacon and Beacon, so that this particular one may be of no significance.
3. P ii, p.5.
4. Probably the revised version of 1561, see above, p.254.

...I wish greatly to have the company of mine old familiars and approved friends, Eusebius, Theophile, and Christopher. I sent my son Theodore and Rachel my daughter for them....<sup>1</sup>

The age of the Son in the Catechism ("not six years old") is probably that of Theodore, Becon's eldest surviving child, who was born in 1554 or 1555.<sup>2</sup>

About the other boy, Basil, there is some confusion. A Basil was baptized in St. Stephen's, Walbrook, as we have seen, on 14 January 1558-9,<sup>3</sup> but the age of the Basil Becon who was admitted at King's College, Cambridge, on 27 August 1579 is given as 17,<sup>4</sup> making his birth-date 1562. The discrepancy is too great to be dismissed as a slip, and I would suggest that the Basil baptized in 1558-9 had died, and that another boy, born three years later, was given, like Theodore, the name of his dead brother.

1. P iii, p.93.

2. P ii, p.8; Theodore matriculated from St. John's College, Cambridge, 1567, aet.12 — see Venn, Alumni, I.i, p.114.

3. See above, p.357.

4. Venn, Alumni, I.i, p.114; Eton College Register, Sterry, p.144, no.1698.

It is impossible to determine with any accuracy the respective birth-dates of the rest of Becon's children. We may assume, however, that the first Theodore and Christophile were born before the middle of 1553, and that the former died immediately before the family's departure for the Continent or soon after their arrival. His name was then given to the next child, born in 1555, presumably at Marburg. Christophile, the second son, probably died at Marburg in 1556 or 1557. Rachel may have been born in England, or at Marburg between 1556 and 1558. The first Basil, as I have suggested, was born (perhaps prematurely) on the journey back to England or immediately Mrs. Becon arrived, and probably died in 1559 or 1560 (but after the composition of the preface to the Catechism).

Of Thomas Becon's surviving children, Theodore, born at Marburg in 1555, matriculated from St. John's College, Cambridge, as a pensioner in 1567 at the early age of twelve. He is described as "of Norfolk". He became B.A. in 1576-7, M.A. in 1580, and M.D. in 1586. He was elected to a

fellowship of his College in 1579, but soon after migrated to Oxford, where he was incorporated M.A. on 11 July 1581 and M.D. in 1587. In the latter year, on 31 October, he married Dorcas Smythe in St. Michael's, Cornhill; only one child of the marriage can be traced — Elizabeth, who died at Canterbury and was buried in the Cathedral on 3 February 1628-9. At the time of her death she seems to have been resident in the parish of St. Alphage in the city. Dr. Becon was ordained, and was Rector of Toppesfield, Essex, in 1603-4; this, however, was the only preferment he had, and he appears to have lived for the latter part of his life in Canterbury, possibly engaged in medical practice. He died there, and was buried in the Cathedral on 21 March 1619-20.<sup>1</sup>

Basil, born at Canterbury in 1562, went to Eton as a King's Scholar in 1574, and passed thence to King's College, Cambridge, where he was admitted scholar on 27 August 1579. He graduated B.A. in

1. Venn, Alumni, I.i, p.114; Foster, Alumni Oxonienses, I, p.94b; Registers of St. Michael's, Cornhill, and Canterbury Cathedral, Harl.Soc.



1583-4 and M.A. in 1587, and was fellow of his College 1582 - 1587. Ordained, like his brother, he held the following preferments: Warehorn, Kent, 1587 - 1608<sup>1</sup>; Snave; Kent, 1597; Hawkinge, 1597 - 1599; Herne Hill, 1605; Waltham, 1610 - 1639.

He is also said to have been Vicar of Silkstone in Yorkshire. On 2 October 1588 in St. Michael's, Cornhill, he married Anne Coale, and by her had five children, entered in the baptisms register of Warehorn: Elizabeth, Rachel, Thomas, Theodore, and John, who died within a few weeks of birth; others may have been born and baptized elsewhere.<sup>2</sup>

Rachel married William Beswick or Berwick, a gentleman of Kent, and died without bearing him any children.<sup>3</sup>

1. Venn, Alumni, gives the date simply as 1587, but the Registers are signed "Basil Becon, Parson" up to 1608. No doubt he held Warehorn in plurality with other livings.
2. See Venn, Alumni, I.i, p.114; Sterry, Eton College Register, p.144, no.1698; Registers of St. Michael's, Cornhill (Harl.Soc'y.), and the parish registers of Warehorn.
3. Visitation of Kent, 1592 — Harl.lxxv; 1619 — Harl.xlii. In the former Rachel is described as "d. of Thomas Beacon gent one of the Prebendares of Christes Church in Canterbury".

In the preface to the Catechism Becon says,

...my most dear and sweet children, I have done mine endeavour to the uttermost of my power, from time to time, as your age requireth, to sow in your tender breasts the wholesome seed of God's most holy word, that from your very cradles ye may learn to know your Lord God.....<sup>1</sup>

One wonders whether he brought up his little ones according to the principles laid down in that work:

So soon as the children be able to speak plainly, let them even from their cradles be taught to utter not vain, foolish, and wanton, but grave, sober, and godly words; as God, Jesus Christ, faith, love, hope, patience, goodness, peace, &c. And when they be able to pronounce whole sentences, let the parents teach their children such sentences as may kindle in them a love toward virtue, and an hatred against vice and sin; as for an example: God alone saveth me. Christ by his death hath redeemed me. The Holy Ghost sanctifieth me.....<sup>2</sup>

Certainly he expresses the greatest satisfaction at their progress:

1. P ii, p.6.

2. P ii, p.348.

...ye for your little strengths daily do your endeavour to bring forth the fruits of this good seed, which, by the help of God's Spirit, I have sown in your young and tender breasts; which thing delighteth me so greatly, that I can none otherwise than daily offer unto God the sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving, which by his Holy Spirit hath wrought so good things in you, yea, and that in so young and tender age....<sup>1</sup>

We cannot doubt that Theodore, Basil, and Rachel fulfilled the early promise of which their father was justly proud; having, as he says, no worldly possessions to leave them, he had striven to enrich them with a patrimony which would leave them more wealthy, ~~as he says,~~ "than king Croesus, even in the midst of <sup>[their]</sup> ~~your~~ poverty".<sup>2</sup>

1. P ii, p.6.

2. P ii, p.7.

## DETACHED NOTE A

## BIOGRAPHICAL MATERIAL

The biographer of Thomas Becon has five main classes of material upon which to draw, and particulars of these are given below. Under headings 4 and 5 I have not attempted to list every work in which Becon is mentioned, but only those which contain interesting or valuable information; many references are simply repetitive. Fuller details of the works mentioned will be found in the bibliographies.

## 1. BECON'S OWN WRITINGS

Certain works (A Christmas Banquet, A Potation for Lent, A Pleasant New Nosegay, A New Year's Gift, The Jewel of Joy, The Fortress of the Faithful, and The Sick Man's Salve) were composed in dialogue form, and one of the interlocutors, Philemon, generally represents Becon himself. From the statements and allusions made by this character it is possible to gather information about Becon's

life, family, and circumstances. In the Jewel of Joy his wanderings in the Midlands are described in some detail, although there are tantalizing omissions. One or two references in the same work, though put into the mouth of another character, Christopher, appear to relate to his life at Cambridge. Many of the prefaces to Becon's works reveal important facts about his life and doings, and sometimes the dedications are suggestive. But the material thus extracted from his writings is by no means copious, and he is silent upon many of the notable incidents in his career, about which we only know from contemporary sources. Finally, his recantation of 1543 does something to fill in one of the more serious gaps in our knowledge of his life.

## 2. CONTEMPORARY DOCUMENTS AND SOURCES

These add little to the material derived from Becon's writings. There are incidental references to be found in Bradford's Works (PS), Bale's Catalogus, Brett's Narrative, Foxe's Acts and Monuments,



the Letters and Papers for Henry VIII's reign, Machyn's Diary, Parker's Correspondence (PS) and his Episcopal Register, the Registers of St. Stephen's Walbrook, the Visitation of the Norwich diocese in 1532 (Camden Society), and Wriothesley's Chronicle. Becon appears as signatory to two letters sent from Frankfort to Calvin in 1555. Records and documents mentioning him are printed by Ames, Typographical Antiquities, Arber, Transcript of Stationers' Register, Ayre, preface to Parker Society edition of his works, Burnet, History of the Reformation, Foxe, Acts and Monuments, Dixon, History of the Church of England, and Strype, Parker and Annals. His name is included in the Frankfort Standesliste for 1555 (Garrett, Exiles), and is also to be found in the Catalogus prefixed to the 1557 (Latin) Emden edition of Cranmer's Answer to Gardiner — the Defensio verae et catholicae doctrinae de Sacramento. Newcourt, Repertorium, and Hennessy, Novum Repertorium, list particulars of institutions to benefices in the London diocese, some of which refer to Becon.

All the material given under the two above

headings has been published, though not all of it has been used by previous biographers.

### 3. CONTEMPORARY MATERIAL

#### UNPUBLISHED AND HITHERTO UNUSED

A Register of Ordinations in the diocese of Norwich, 1531-1561 — a paper book in very bad condition in the Bishop's Registry at Norwich, containing entries relative to ordinations by John Underwood, Bishop of Chalcedon.

### 4. SECONDARY SOURCES OF INFORMATION

Only the more important works call for mention here: Anderson, Annals of the English Bible, Churton, Life of Nowell, Colligan, William Whittingham of Chester, Ellis, Shoreditch, Garrett, The Marian Exiles, Haweis, Sketches of the Reformation, Holland, Heroologia, Jacobs, The Lutheran Movement in England, Lorimer, John Knox and the Church of England, Maitland, Essays on the Reformation in England, Mullinger, The University of Cambridge, Le Neve, Fasti, Strype, Aylmer, Cranmer, Eccl. Mem., and Grindal, Venn, Alumni Cantabrigienses.

## 5. BIOGRAPHICAL NOTICES

These vary greatly in scope and value. The earliest is Bale's brief notice in the Catalogus (1557), which is both biassed and apologetic in tone; couched in general terms, it gives little precise information, apart from the fact that when it was written Becon was in Marburg. Next comes Lupton's short and inaccurate account in The History of the Moderne Protestant Divines (1637). Tanner's notice in Bibliotheca Britannico-Hibernia (1748) contains a few biographical details, based mainly upon Bale; here, however, for the first time (so far as I can trace) appears the statement that Becon was Vicar of Brenzett — an error, the source of which cannot be discovered. The accounts in Ritson's Bibliographia Poetica (1802), Brook's Lives of the Puritans (1813), Chalmers' General Bibliographical Dictionary (1812-1813) and Granger's Biographical History of England (1824) are meagre and of little consequence. The prefaces to selections of Becon's works published by the Religious Tract Society (British Reformers, 1828-1831 — reviewed by Dr. Alexander in the American Princeton

Review) and by S.P.C.K. (1836) contain nothing of additional interest, and simply reproduce the facts (and errors) accumulated by previous writers.

The first serious attempt to present the full story of Becon's life is to be found in the biographical notice by the Reverend John Ayre prefixed to the first volume of the Parker Society's edition of Becon's works. This, while not entirely free from the errors of its predecessors, makes use of hitherto neglected sources of information, such as Strype's works, Foxe's Acts and Monuments, and above all, Becon's own writings, to which previous biographers unaccountably neglected to refer. Ayre's account has proved invaluable to all subsequent writers, though he is somewhat too laudatory and partial in his treatment — an understandable fault when the circumstances at the time of its composition, and the objects of the Parker Society, are taken into account. This notice appeared in 1843, and full-length articles based upon it are included in Cooper's Athenae Cantabrigienses (1858) and in the Dictionary of National Biography (1885 ff.). The shorter notice in the Census in Miss Garrett's

Marian Exiles is valuable for its references to Becon's life on the Continent during Mary's reign. None of the smaller accounts in biographical dictionaries and the like are important enough to call for special mention.

#### DETACHED NOTE B

##### THE DATE OF THOMAS BECON'S BIRTH

The data for determining when Becon was born are meagre and inconsistent.

1. The portrait in the 1563 edition of the Relics of Rome and in the 1566 edition of the Governance of Virtue is inscribed: "AETATIS SVAE. 41 ANQ DNI.1553."
2. The portrait in the folio edition bears the words: "ANNO AETATIS SVAE. 49. 1560."
3. Becon graduated B.A. in 1530-1,<sup>1</sup> and while "but a child of sixteen years"<sup>2</sup> speaks of hearing Latimer preach at Cambridge.

Assuming that "Aetatis suae 41" and "Anno aetatis suae 49" mean respectively "in his 41st.

1. Venn, Alumni, I.i, p.114.

2. P ii, p.424.



year" (i.e., between his 40th. and 41st. birthday anniversaries) and "in his 49th. year" (i.e., between his 48th. and 49th. birthday anniversaries), it is clear that he must have been born between 25 March 1513 and 24 March 1513-14,<sup>1</sup> according to the former, or between 25 March 1512 and 24 March 1512-13, according to the latter.

In the less likely event of the inscriptions meaning that he attained his 41st. birthday anniversary during 1553 and his 49th. during 1560, it is equally clear that he must have been born between either 25 March 1512 and 24 March 1512-13, or 25 March 1511 and 24 March 1511-12.

Calculation will show, however, that no single birth-date during these periods can possibly be compatible with all the data, interpreted as they can be in different ways. For instance, if he were born between 25 March 1512 and 24 March 1512-13, he could not be in his 41st. year in 1553, nor could

1. Before 1752 the year began on 25 March, not 1 January.

he have attained his 49th. birthday anniversary during 1560. One or other of the dates on the portraits must be wrong.

Turning now to Becon's graduation, we find that he was admitted B.A. in 1530-31 — that is, presumably, in the March. This would normally be after four years study, and I have already suggested that his stans in quadragesima began on Ash Wednesday, 22 February 1530-1,<sup>1</sup> which would mean that he entered the University not later than March 1526-7. Since the freshman of those days was usually fourteen or fifteen years old, we may not unreasonably place Becon's birth-date, calculated on this basis, not later than the end of 1512-13, and probably little if at all earlier than January 1511-12.

While it is clear from the data available that we cannot fix the date of Thomas Becon's birth with any precision, I am inclined to think that we shall not be much wide of the mark in

1. See above, p.40.

placing it in 1512 — that is, between 25 March 1512 and 24 March 1512-13.<sup>1</sup>

#### DETACHED NOTE C

#### BECON'S ACADEMICAL CAREER

Thomas Becon proceeded B.A. in 1530-1, and there is no doubt that this was his only academical distinction. The certificate which he completed in 1561<sup>2</sup> is conclusive; on it he described himself simply as "Baccalaur. Art.". Occasionally in records he is designated S.T.B.<sup>3</sup> or S.T.P.<sup>4</sup>, but is always referred to as Mr. Becon.

1. Lupton's statement (The History of the Moderne Protestant Divines, p.333) that Becon died in 1570 at the age of 60 is obviously inaccurate, as it is certain that he died in the summer of 1567, and 1507 would be altogether too early a birth-date.
2. See above, p.368.
3. Hennessey, Nov.Repert. p.80; Parker's Register, p.802.
4. Portraits; Newcourt, Repertorium, i, p.330; Parker, Register, pp.204-205, 833, 834. It may be this designation, wrongly interpreted, which has given rise to the idea that Becon was for a time a University Professor.

Biographers, however, have showered honours upon him. Tanner says,

...in academia Cantabrig. studiis philosophicis et theologicis imbutus per varios academicorum honorum gradus at cathedram theologicam ascendit,<sup>1</sup>

and Bale describes him as "artium magister".<sup>2</sup> Ayre states that he "graduated doctor of divinity" at Cambridge,<sup>3</sup> and the DNB also designates him D.D., while Venn says that he is reputed to have been B.D.<sup>4</sup> It is also asserted that he had some connexion with Oxford. Lupton says that

...in the reign of King Edward the sixth, he did professe Divinity in the flourishing University of Oxford, without impeachment or molestation,<sup>5</sup>

and Holland describes him as "Professor of Theology" at Oxford, temp. Edward VI.<sup>6</sup> Cooper also states

1. p.85.

2. Index, p.430.

3. P i, p.vii.

4. Alumni, I.i, p.114.

5. op.cit. p.331.

6. Heroologia, p.179.

that "he appears, but at what period is unknown, to have commenced D.D. at Oxford".<sup>1</sup>

For none of these assertions does there seem to be the slightest foundation. As for Becon's association with Oxford, his name does not appear either in Bliss's Athenae Oxonienses<sup>2</sup> or in Wood's Fasti Oxonienses. It is not impossible that here there has been confusion with Theodore, his son, who graduated M.D. at Cambridge in 1586<sup>3</sup> and was incorporated M.D. at Oxford in 1587.<sup>4</sup>

#### DETACHED NOTE D

##### BECON'S ORDINATION AND FIRST PREFERMENT

There is no doubt that Thomas Becon was

1. Athenae, i, p.247.
2. Apart from a reference to Dr. Richard Smith's attack upon him, see above, pp.376-380.
3. Venn, Alumni, I.i, p.114.
4. ibid; Foster, Alumni Oxonienses, i, p.94.



ordained priest on 12 April 1533 to the title of the College of St. John the Evangelist at Rushworth. The purpose of this note is simply to consider the apparent discrepancy between this fact and the statement which he makes in the preface to the folio edition, that at the time of writing he had travailed twentysix years in the ministry. The evidence relating to his supposed preferment to the Vicarage of Brenzett is also discussed.

# I

1. From what date is the period of 26 years to be calculated ?

i. The preface is dated 17 January 1564, that is, 1563-4, old style, for the last volume of the folio edition appeared during 1564. 26 years deducted from this gives a commencement date for Becon's ministry of January 1537-8.

ii. But the dedication of the folio edition is to the Archbishops and Bishops of the English Church, and their names appear at the head of the preface, which is partly addressed

to them. If dedication and preface were composed at the same time, they must have been written between the consecration of Cheney as Bishop of Gloucester and Bristol on 19 April 1562, and the death of Kitchin of Llandaff on 31 October 1563, for both prelates are mentioned, and the others were either consecrated or translated before, or died or were translated afterwards. This, then, gives a date for the commencement of Becon's ministry somewhere between April 1536 and October 1537.

iii. If, however, the preface was written first, before the first volume of the folio edition went to press in 1560, and dedication and date were added after, when the whole work was issued, a commencement date for his ministry of 1534 would be obtained.

Of these possibilities, all we can say is that (ii) is perhaps the most likely, and (iii) the least likely. Even so, however, there is a period of some 3-4 years for which to account.

2. We now have to ask, therefore, What did

Becon mean by "ministry" ? There are four possible interpretations:

- (a) The whole period from his ordination as exorcist and acolyte on 25 May 1532;
- (b) The period which began with his admission to the priesthood on 12 April 1533;
- (c) The period during which, by preaching or otherwise, he exercised a 'reformed' ministry — omitting, therefore, the time during which he was occupied in priestly duties, either at Rushworth or elsewhere, before finally standing out as a whole-hearted advocate of the Reformation;
- (d) The period during which he exercised an active ministry, as opposed to those times when he was engaged in teaching.

In one or other of these ways, taken in conjunction with the different possibilities suggested in (1) above, gaps of from three to six years can be accounted for.

No satisfactory solution of the problem is possible, however, when the data are so uncertain. Becon was never very accurate in his dates or precise in recording periods of time, and the most attractive conjecture is that in writing of his 26 years in the ministry he excluded from his computation such time as he had spent in teaching. In any case it is clear beyond all doubt from the Norwich Episcopal Register that he was ordained priest in 1533, and, whatever he meant by 'ministry', would now be described as having been 31 (or 32, if the minor orders are included) years in the ministry, when the last instalment of the folio edition appeared in 1564.

## II

Of the many mysteries surrounding Becon's life, none is more baffling than the association of his name with the Vicarage of Brenzett, a tiny parish situated between Romney Marsh and Wallend Marsh, some 4 or 5 miles inland to the north-west from New Romney. United now with the parishes of Snargate and Snave, which lie adjoining it on the

north, it shares with them a population of only 387, though four centuries ago the district may have been better populated. Again, however, one thing is certain: Thomas Becon was never Vicar of Brenzett. The institutions to the church of St. Eanswith are recorded in Cranmer's Register as follows, for the period with which we are concerned:

26 Sept. 1535 Wm. Morfoyle, A.M., presented by the Master and Wardens of the College of Wye, on the death of Thomas Daykyn.

8 July 1538 Henry Becher, S.T.P., presented on the death of the last incumbent [not named] on the presentation of Robert Hoorne of Kenerton, Esq., by reason of a grant from the College of Wye.

28 July 1541 Thomas Chapman, on the death of the last incumbent [not named] on the presentation of the College of Wye.

Then follow two entries from Archbishop Parker's Register:

12 Dec. 1562 John Pady, on the death of Tho. Chapman, on the presentation of Will. Damsell, Knt.

14 July 1567 John Whytynge, on the resignation of John Pady; presentation as before.



Although it is thus established that Thomas Becon was never Vicar of Brenzett, there are three ways in which his name may have become connected with the place:

1. Brenzett may be a mistake for some other place of like sound or spelling, with which Tanner (who first records the connexion with Brenzett) had discovered that Becon had some association of which all record has now disappeared. Great Bricet, the parish adjoining Nettlestead, the seat of Lord Wentworth, was an attractive guess, but nothing could be traced.

2. Becon may perhaps have had some actual connexion with Brenzett, either during his Kentish retirement, or when he lived at Canterbury — and here again, Tanner may have had access to information no longer available.

3. But the most probable explanation is that confusion has occurred between Thomas Becon and his son Basil, who in 1597 was Rector of the adjoining parish of Snave. This was

not united with Brenzett until 1917, but it seems that in earlier days Rectors of Snave occasionally served Brenzett in the absence of the Vicar of the latter — though one man was never actually in possession of both livings at once. Behind the legend of Thomas Becon's association with Brenzett, however, may lie some recollection of Basil Becon's year spent ministering at Snave.

#### DETACHED NOTE E

#### A SELECT COLLATION OF THE 1542

#### AND FOLIO EDITIONS OF THE

#### POTATION FOR LENT

The page and line references are to the Parker Society's edition of the folio revision of the Potation.

91/41 denotes page 91 of volume i, line 41.

	Folio	1542
91/41	...the doctrine of penance (as they term it)...	ye mooste confort-able Sacrament of Penāce...
91/42	taught unto penitent sinners...	exercised toward penitent sinners...
91/48	...the most blessed sacrament of Christ's very body and blood..	of the Altare Christes very body and bloud...
91/51	this time of Lent and at all other times also...	this holy time of Lent... "and...also" omitted.
94/39	....penance...	...this Sacrament of penāce...
110/24	OF CERTAIN CEREMONIES HERETOFORE USED IN THE CHURCH AT THE TIME OF LENT...	of the Ceremonies used in the church this tyme of Lent...
110/27	....was....	...is...(and so throughout).
117/8 /13 /15	...sacrament of Christ's body and blood...	...Sacrament of the Altare...
117/26	...the holy mysteries of Christ's body and blood....	...the body of oure LORDE...
119/8	...the holy mysteries of Christ's body and blood...	...ye very body of Christ...
119/16	...the sacrament...	...Christes body...
119/21	...sacrament of the body and blood of Christ...	...Sacrament of the Altare...

119/24		[after "sacrament"]: Christes very body & bloude...
119/45	...with the body...	...with the true body...
120/2	...RECEIVED THE SACRAMENT...	...received the mooste blessed Sac- ramēt of the Altare..
120/3 /4	....received the sac- rament of the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ...	...received the body of our LORDE Jesus Christ, and w <sup>t</sup> that same mooste glorious bodeye tasted also his most precious bloud...
120/17		[after "King"]: where no terrestrial & corruptible meate is eaten, but euen the very bodeye of ye pure & immacu- late Lambe Jesus Christ...
120/36 /37	...the holy mysteries of the body and blood of our Lord and alone Saviour Jesu Christ..	the very body of our Lord Jesus Christ...
121/44	....penance....	...the holy Sacra- ment of Penaunce...
121/45	...Christ's body and blood...	...[sacrament] of the Altare...

## DETACHED NOTE F

## BECON'S CATECHISM

The catechism was properly a simple and succinct method of instruction by question and answer, and the Reformation produced admirable examples in Luther's Short Catechism and the Catechism in the Edwardine Prayer Books. Becon's metrical Catechism seems to have been similar in scope, but his New Catechism is a work of wholly different character. It is actually a comprehensive system of doctrine thrown into catechism form, and is probably the most extensive composition of its kind ever produced by an Anglican theologian — larger even than Hammond's Practical Catechism. Like other longer works in catechetical form, it is no doubt indebted to Luther's Greater Catechism, in which the question and answer method is abandoned in favour of an extended expository treatment.

Dr. Jacobs, however, has shown that Becon's New Catechism is beholden to Luther for more than



its form alone. It is, he says,

...an independent development by one in whose mind and heart, Luther's explanations, often in their very words, are deeply fixed, and who with great freedom, expands and develops what he has drawn from this source and thoroughly assimilated.<sup>1</sup>

Only in the section on the Lord's Supper does Dr. Jacobs note an almost entire absence of Lutheran influence; there, he considers, "the traces of the Calvinistic movement....are very apparent", though we have observed a more pronouncedly Bucerian or Cranmerian tendency.

This dependence upon Luther's explanations leads Dr. Jacobs to suggest that Becon may well have been wholly or partly responsible for the preparation of Cranmer's Catechism of 1548. He considers that this was probably made from the Nürnberg Catechism of 1533, under the Primate's

1. op.cit., p.325. For examples of Lutheran influence, see Jacobs's article, "The Lutheran Element in Early English Catechisms" in The Lutheran Church Review, No.3, July 1888, pp.173-177.

supervision, by one of his chaplains — either Taylor, Ponet, or Becon, and he regards the latter as most likely to have performed or assisted in the work.<sup>1</sup>

#### DETACHED NOTE G

#### BECON'S USE OF SCRIPTURE

In the following table an attempt has been made to give a rough and ready indication of the extent to which Becon used scripture in his writings, and of the portions of the Bible on which he most frequently drew. The figures represent the number of chapters from which citations have been made, but it should be borne in mind that from a single chapter a dozen or more quotations may have been taken. To carry the analysis into greater detail, however, would have been hardly worth while, since the purpose of the table is only to afford a

1. The Lutheran Movement in England, pp. 314-325.

general indication of Becon's use of the Bible. Thus, there are 50 chapters in Genesis; he quotes from 27 in the Governance of Virtue, 20 in the Jewel, and 11 in the Commonplaces; taking these three specimen works together, the citations cover 36 different chapters. No doubt more comprehensive analysis would have revealed a more extensive use of scripture.

# OLD TESTAMENT

Book	Chapters	Governance	Jewel	Commonplaces	Total	Book	Chapters	Governance	Jewel	Commonplaces	Total
Genesis	50	27	20	11	36	Eccles.	12	4	5	-	7
Exodus	40	15	6	3	18	S. of S.	8	-	2	-	2
Lev.	27	7	-	-	7	Isaiah	66	29	27	28	45
Numbers	36	6	2	1	7	Jeremiah	52	26	10	13	30
Deut.	34	14	5	10	18	Lam.	5	2	1	2	4
Joshua	24	2	-	1	3	Ezekiel	48	19	4	4	21
Judges	21	2	-	-	2	Daniel	12	5	3	2	5
Ruth	4	-	-	-	-	Hosea	14	6	4	5	8
1 Sam.	31	11	3	4	13	Joel	3	1	1	1	1
2 Sam.	24	10	2	-	10	Amos	9	5	-	1	5
1 Kings	22	12	3	1	12	Obadiah	1	1	-	-	1
2 Kings	25	10	3	-	11	Jonah	3	1	1	-	2
1 Chron.	29	3	1	1	5	Micah	7	3	1	2	3
2 Chron.	36	10	2	1	11	Nahum	3	1	1	-	2
Ezra	10	1	-	-	1	Habakkuk	3	2	-	1	2
Nehemiah	13	1	-	-	1	Zeph.	3	1	-	-	1
Job	42	9	14	7	20	Haggai	2	-	-	-	-
Psalms	150	62	67	44	96	Zech.	14	7	4	3	10
Proverbs	31	23	9	7	24	Malachi	4	2	1	2	3
Total for Old Testament						928	340	202	155	447	

## APOCRYPHA

Book	Chapters	Governance	Jewel	Common-places	Total	Book	Chapters	Governance	Jewel	Common-places	Total
1 Esdras	9	-	-	-	-	Baruch	6	2	-	-	2
2 Esdras	16	1	1	1	2	S. of Ch.	1	-	-	-	-
Tobit	14	4	8	3	8	Susanna	1	1	1	-	1
Judith	16	3	1	1	4	B. & Dr.	1	1	-	-	1
R. of Est	7	-	-	-	-	Pr. of M.	1	-	-	-	-
Wisdom	19	8	7	5	11	1 Macc.	16	4	-	1	5
Ecclus.	51	22	14	3	32	2 Macc.	15	4	-	2	4
Total for Apocrypha						173	50	32	16	70	

## NEW TESTAMENT

Book	Chapters	Governance	Jewel	Common-places	Total	Book	Chapters	Governance	Jewel	Common-places	Total
Matthew	28	26	26	26	27	2 Thess.	3	1	1	2	2
Mark	16	10	8	8	13	1 Tim.	6	6	5	5	6
Luke	24	19	19	13	23	2 Tim.	4	2	4	4	4
John	21	20	18	19	21	Titus	3	2	3	3	3
Acts	28	22	14	15	24	Philemon	1	-	-	-	-
Romans	16	15	15	15	16	Hebrews	13	10	9	10	11
1 Cor.	16	11	13	8	13	James	5	3	4	4	5
2 Cor.	13	6	9	4	11	1 Peter	5	5	5	4	5
Gal.	6	6	5	6	6	2 Peter	3	3	2	1	3
Ephes.	6	6	5	6	6	1 John	5	5	5	5	5
Phil.	4	4	4	4	4	2 John	1	1	-	1	1
Col.	4	4	4	3	4	3 John	1	-	-	1	1
1 Thess.	5	2	2	4	4	Rev.	22	13	15	8	19
Total for New Testament						259	202	194	179	237	

## APPENDIX

## COMMENDATORY LINES IN WILLIAM TURNER'S

A PRESERVATIVE, OR TRIACLE...

Thomas Beconus  
Ecclesiastes Lectori

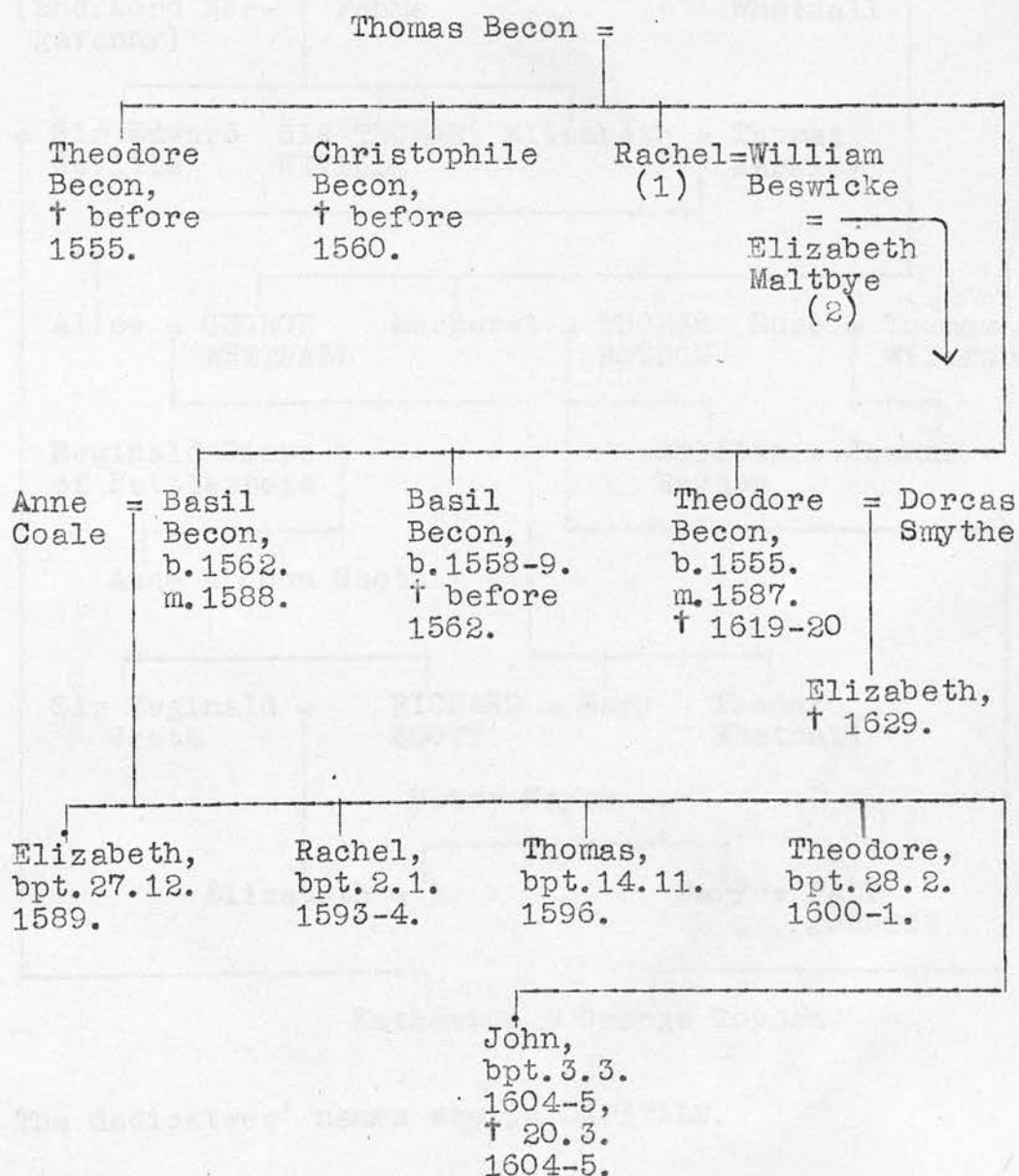
Quando ita divini fert immutanda voluntas  
Nummis, assiduo cunctorum Marte suorum  
Explorare fidem, constantia pectora, morum  
Invictum robur: confirmaturus in illis  
Hac ratione fui, simul & pietatis amorem:  
Implorari sui docturus corde fideli  
Spiritus auxilium: nos quorum cura suorum  
Commissa est fidei, vigilesque ducesque tuendis.  
Praeficimur castris, te nunc tibi quanta monemus  
Immineant, miles Christi, discrimina vitam  
Si sapis & salvam cupis in statione manere  
Tuta praecipimus, summo vitare maligni  
Insidias hostis studio, fraudemque cavere.  
Sed ne tela tibi desint, queis fortiter illis  
Occurras, vires divino robore frangas,  
Et quae parta suo precioso sanguine Christus  
Tradidit, & partam bello tueare quietam:  
Scripturae armabit te plena panoplia sacrae,  
Ex qua cuique malo liceat depromere quicquid  
Serviat arcendo. Quod si livore maligno  
Commotus pueris baptismi munera parvis  
Extorquere velit, iam partae signa salutis,  
Atque tibi curare tuam solatia prolem  
Aeternum rerum Dominum patremque bonorum:  
Ecce parata adsunt tibi munimenta tuisque  
Et tela invictis fundentia viribus hostem,  
Turneri hoc opera factum, cui saepe Papistae  
Insignem victi palmam, laudemque dedere,  
Cui Deus aeternam transactae praemia vitae  
Donabit vitam: Tu grates pectore grato  
Tantis pro meritis age gratus teque tuere  
Fortiter atque tuos, & vires frange malorum.  
Militiae tandem finis continget, ovansque  
Cum Christo duce tum caelum tua nota subibis.

Vale.



## GENEALOGICAL TABLE 1.

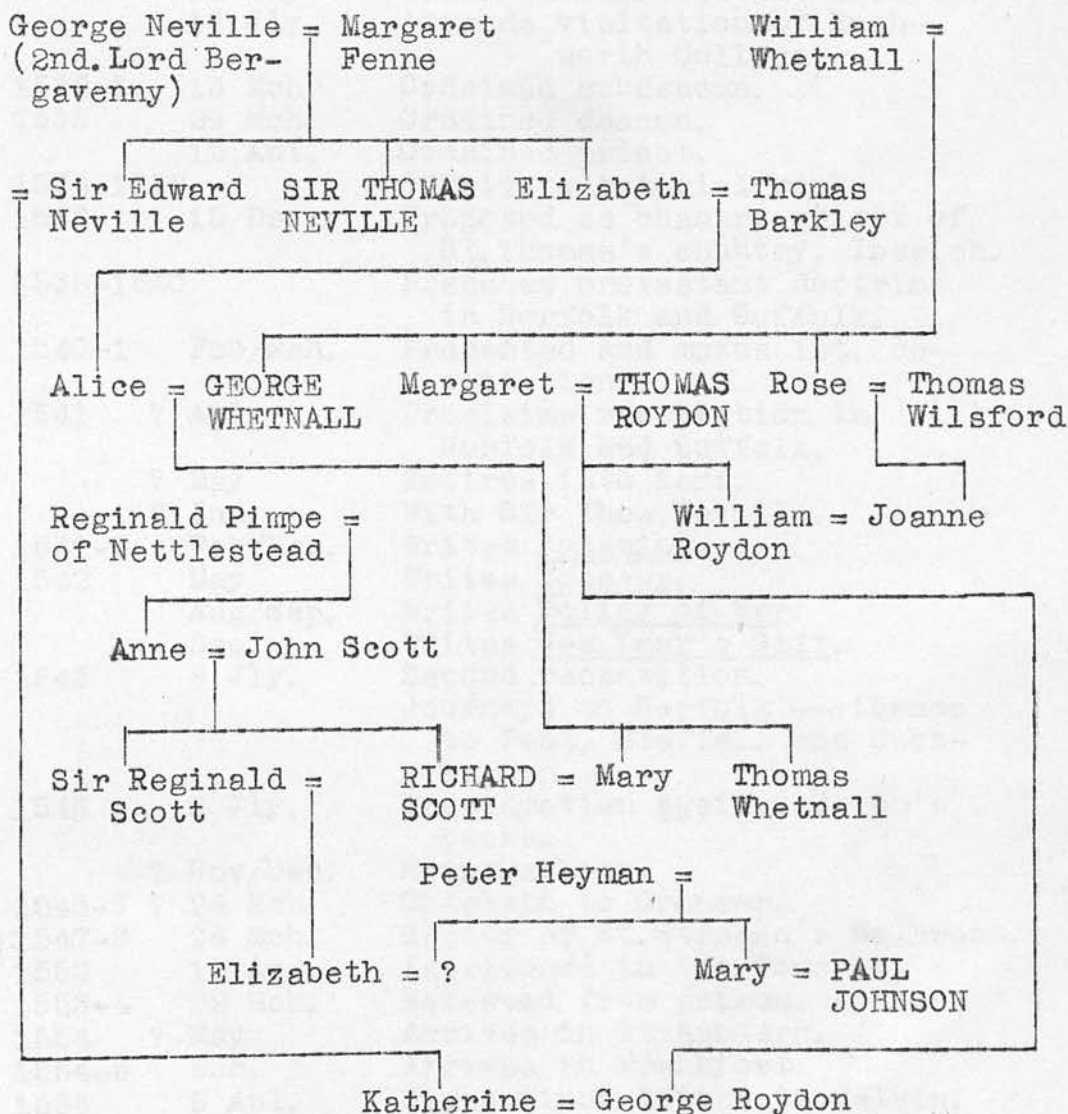
## THOMAS BECON'S FAMILY



## GENEALOGICAL TABLE 2

## INTER-RELATIONSHIPS OF DEDICATEES

## OF BECON'S WORKS



The dedicatees' names are in CAPITALS.

## CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE

1512		Thomas Becon born.
1526-7	? Mch.	Enters Cambridge
1530-1	22 Feb.	Incepting Bachelor.
1531	Apl.	Graduates B.A.
1532	25 May	Ordained exorcist and acolyte.
	18 Jly.	Attends visitation of Rushworth College
1532-3	13 Mch.	Ordained subdeacon.
1533	29 Mch.	Ordained deacon.
	12 Apl.	Ordained priest.
1534-1538		? Private tutorial work.
1538	15 Dec.	Proposed as chantry priest of St. Thomas's chantry, Ipswich.
1538-1540		Preaches protestant doctrine in Norfolk and Suffolk.
1540-1	Feb/Mch.	Presented and makes 1st. recantation.
1541	? Apl.	Proclaims recantation in Norfolk and Suffolk.
	? May	Retires into Kent.
	? Jun.	With Sir Thos. Neville.
1541-2	Feb/Mch.	Writes <u>Potation</u> .
1542	May	Writes <u>Nosegay</u> .
	Aug/Sep.	Writes <u>Policy of War</u> .
	Dec.	Writes <u>New Year's Gift</u> .
1543	8 Jly.	Second recantation.
		Journeys to Norfolk — thence to Peak, Staffs., and Cubbington.
1546	8 Jly.	Proclamation against Becon's books.
	? Nov/Dec.	Returns home.
1546-7	? 24 Mch.	Chaplain to Cranmer.
1547-8	24 Mch.	Rector of St. Stephen's Walbrook.
1553	16 Aug.	Imprisoned in the Tower.
1553-4	22 Mch.	Released from prison.
1554	? May	Arrives in Strasbourg.
1554-5	Mch.	Arrives in Frankfort.
1555	5 Apl.	Signs first letter to Calvin.
	20 Sep.	Signs second letter to Calvin.
		Theodore Becon II born

1556	30 Aug.	Speaks to Brett at Strasbourg. Goes to Marburg.
1558-9	14 Jan.	Basil Becon I baptized in St. Stephen's Walbrook.
	Feb/Mch.	Becon returns to England.
1559		Appointed to the fourth Prebend in Canterbury Cathedral.
	21 Oct.	Preaches at the funeral of the Countess of Rutland.
1559-60	Jan.	Concerned in proceedings regard- ing presentation to a Win- chester living.
1560	15 Apl.	Preaches before Lord Mayor and Aldermen.
	16 Apl.	Preaches at the funeral of John Bedy.
	21 Oct.	Becomes Rector of Buckland.
1560-1	3 Mch.	Made Vicar of Christ Church Newgate.
1561	26 Oct.	Visits Eastbridge Hospital.
1562	3/4 Apl.	Becomes Vicar of Sturrey.
	20 Jly.	Preaches at marriage of "master Nycolles" daughter.
1562-3	13 Feb.	Signs petition in Convocation.
1563		Becomes Rector of St. Stephen's Walbrook again.
	Jun.	Resigns St. Stephen's.
	10 Aug.	Appointed Rector of St. Dionis Backchurch.
1563-4	Mch.	Grindal's visitation with refer- ence to vestments: Becon re- fuses but afterwards submits. Signs certificate regarding the order kept at Canterbury Folio edition of Becon's works issued.
1566	7 Apl.	Preaches at Paul's Cross.
	10 Apl.	Preaches Lent sermon at Paul's Cross.
1567	30 Jun.	Thomas Becon dies at Canterbury.

## BIBLIOGRAPHIES

## I

## THOMAS BECON'S WORKS

## A. GENUINE WORKS

These have been listed chronologically according to the composition date, or where that cannot be accurately ascertained, the publication date. Where neither is certainly known, the work has been located as nearly as possible.

\* date of composition unknown

† dates of composition and publication unknown.

§ published work not included in the folio edition.

¶ work no longer extant.

- § ¶ 1. First recantation, February or March 1540-1. Fragments included in the second recantation.



2. Newes out of heauen, by Theodore Basille.  
Probably composed for Christmas 1541.  
John Mayler for John Gough: London,  
[1541-2 ?]. 8°. [STC 1739].
  - 2a. another edition. John Mayler for John  
Gough: London, 1542. 8°. [STC 1740]
3. A Christmas Bankette garnyshed with many  
pleasaunt and deynty dishes, by Theo-  
dore Basille. Composed for Christmas  
1541. John Mayler for John Gough: Lon-  
don, 1542. 8°. [STC 1713]
  - 3a. another edition. John Mayler for  
John Gough: London, 1542. 8°.  
[STC 1714].
  - 3b. Een Christlick Werschap, oft Een  
Kersmis Bancket. Einen veghelicken  
Christen mensche seer nut ende  
profijtelick, te lesen.... Ouer-  
ghesettet wt het Engelsch in gueden  
Duytsche, etc. [Campen], 1543. 8°.
4. A potation or drinkyng for this holi  
time of Lent. Composed in February or  
March 1541-2. John Mayler for John  
Gough: London, 1542. 8°. [STC 1749].
  - 4a. another edition. A Potaciō or drīk-  
ynge for this holy tyme of Lēt very  
cōfortable for al penitēt sinners  
w̄ a table in the end, newly prepar-  
ed & diligētly ouersene by Theodor  
Basille. Ioh̄n Meyler for Ioh̄n Gough:  
London, 1543. 8°. [STC 1750]
- \* 5. A newe pathway vnto praier, by T. Bas-  
ille. John Mayler for John Gough: Lon-  
don, 1542. 8°. [STC 1734].

5a. another edition. The right pathwaye unto Prayer, ful of muche godly fruyte and Christen knowledge, wyth a Table in the end, lately made and newly recognised by Theodore Basille. Iohn Mayler for Iohn Gough: London, 1543. 8<sup>o</sup>. [STC 1756].

6. A pleasaunt newe Nosegaye, full of many godly and swete floures, lately gathered by Theodore Basille. Composed in May 1542. Iohn Maylerre for Iohn Gough: London, 1542. 8<sup>o</sup>. [STC 1742].

6a. another edition — as before, 1543.

7. The new pollecy of warre, wherin is declared not only how y<sup>t</sup> mooste cruell Tyraunt the great Turke maye be ouercome, but also all other enemies of the Christen publique weale, lately diuised by Theodore Basille. [with woodcuts]. Composed August or September 1542. Iohn Maylerre for Iohn Gough: London, 1542. 8<sup>o</sup>. [STC 1735].

7a. another edition with new title: The true defence of peace [fragment only]. John Mayler for John Gough: London, 1542. [STC 1775].

7b. another edition. The true defēce of Peace, wherin is declaredde the cause of all warres now a dayes, and how they maye be pacified, called before the Pollecy of Warre, devysed & lately recognised by Theodore Basille. [with woodcuts]. Iohn Mayler for Iohn Gough: London, 1543. 8<sup>o</sup>. [STC 1776].

7c. another edition — as before, 1544. [Ames, Typ.Ant., iii, p.543].

- \* 8. A devout and godly prayer, for all degrees and estates, made upon the hundred and fifteenth Psalm.... This was appended to No.7b, but was afterwards subjoined to No.9, in the folio edition.
- \* 9. Davids harpe ful of armony, by Theodore Basille. John Mayler for John Gough: London, 1542. 8<sup>o</sup>. [STC 1717]
- \*\*10. Preface to Coverdale's translation of Bullinger's Der Christlich Eestand (Tig. 1540, 12mo.) entitled The golden boke of christen matrimonye. John Mayler for John Gough: London, 1542. 8<sup>o</sup>. This translation, says Becon, was "for the more ready sale, set forth in my name by the hungry printer with my preface.....", P i, p.29. [STC 1723].
  - 10a. another edition, as before, 1543. [STC 1724].
  - 10b. another edition, The christen state of matrimony, moost necessary & profitable for all thē, that entend to liue quietly and godlye in the christē state of holy wedlock, newly set forth in Englysh — as before, 1546.
- † § ¶ 11. Catechism in verse: nothing is known of this work, which Becon replaced by a New Catechism in the folio edition, retaining only the prefatory verses (see P i, p.29; also Bale, Index, fol.175b: Poole and Bateson, pp.430-431).
- † § ¶ 12. Christmas Carrols very new and godly. This work is not extant, but is mentioned in the proclamation of prohibited books, 8 July 1546 — see L & P Henry VIII, xxi, i, p.611, no.1233; also Foxe, v, p.567.

13. A new yeares gyfte more precious than golde, worthy to be embrased no lesse ioyfully than thākfully of every true christē man, etc. Composed in December 1542. Iohn Mayler for Iohn Gough: London, 1543. 8<sup>o</sup>. [STC 1738].
- \* 14. An inuectyue agenst swearing, by Theodore Basille. J. Mayler for J. Gough: London, 1543. 8<sup>o</sup>. [STC 1731].
- 14a. another edition, as before, 8<sup>o</sup>. no date. [STC 1732].
- § 15. Second recantation, 8 July 1543 — see Foxe, v, App. XII.
16. The Governance of Virtue; probably composed late in 1543, and first published (anonymously ?) before 1547.
- 16a. The gouernance of vertue, London, [1549] — or 1550. 16mo. [STC 1725].
- 16b. another edition. J. Day: London, [? 1560]. 16mo. [STC 1726].
- 16c. another edition. The Gouvernaunce of Vertur, teaching all faythful christiās how they oughte daily to leade their lyfe, & fruitfully to spend their time vnto the glorie of God & the health of their owne soules. Newlye corrected and augmēted. [with a portrait]. Iohn Day: London, 1566, 8<sup>o</sup>. [STC 1727].
- 16d. another edition. J. Day: London, 1578. 16mo. [STC 1728].
- 16e. another edition. Simon Stafford: London, 1607. 12mo.

17. An Invective agaynst whoredom and al other abominations of uncleannesse, a worke most necessary for thys present time. In english verse. [folio ed. title]. Composed between 1543 and 1546 ? Published 1548 ?

18. A dialogue of Christ's Nativity between the Angel and the Shepherds. Composed between 1543 and 1546 ? Published 1548 ? — see P ii, p.427.

[18a. This work was probably revised before inclusion in the folio edition, where it is entitled, A new Dialogue betwene the Angel of God and the Shepherds of y<sup>e</sup> felde, concerning the nativity & byrth of Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior, no lesse godly than swete and pleasaunte to reade. In english verse.]

¶ 19. The Shield of Salvation — a translation from the Latin made during Becon's sojourn in the Midlands, but apparently never published and not now extant; see Works P ii, p.427. Probable date 1545-1546 ?

¶ 20. The Commemoration of Death — another work translated from the Latin between 1543 and 1546, but not published and not extant under this title. It may, however, be the work entitled The Praise of Death, see no.66. also P ii, p.427.

21. The Solace of the soule veri comfortable against the bytter stormes of sicknes and death greatly encouragyng the faithful both patiently and thankfully to suffer the good pleasure of God in all kinde of aduersytye. [folio ed. title]. W.Hill, 1548. [STC 1774]. A translation from the Latin, see P ii, p.427.



22. An homely against whoredome. Composed early in 1547. Published in the first Book of Homilies, July 1547.
23. The Jewel of Joy. Probably composed 1547-1548. The earliest copy extant (8°. John Day: London, 1553) is without pagination: sigs. B-Y each in eight leaves, Aa in four leaves; titlepage, all before sig.B, and a small portion of sig.Aa i, are wanting. "It is not unlikely that, owing to the accession of Queen Mary, the printing of the book was never completed" — Brit.Mus.Cat. It is improbable, however, that this imperfect copy was the first.
- \* § 24. The Physycke of the soule, wherein thou shalt finde many Godly emplastures & comfortable salues agaynst al spiritual diseases, very necessary to be red of the true christens in these last and perilous days. Set forth by Thomas Becon. Sold by W.Hill. 10 July 1549. 16mo. 24pp. [STC 1741].
- § 25. A humble peticyon to the lord, practysed in the commune prayer of the whole famlye at Shene, during the trouble of the ....duke of Somerset....gathered & set furth by T.Becon, minister there. Which trouble began the VI of October the year of our Lord MD.XLIX and ended the VI of Febuarye then next ensuing. [This is appended to The spyrytual and precious pearle, probably Coverdale's translation of a work by Otho Wermyllerus, with a prefatory epistle by Edward Duke of Somerset — see bibliography attached to Cooper's notice of Coverdale, no.25, Athenae, i, p.273]. London. 1550. 12 mo.

26. The floure of godlye prayers most worthy to be vsed in these our dayes, for the sauegarde, healthe, and comforte of al degrees and estates, etc. Iohn Day: London, 1551. 8<sup>o</sup>. [STC 1720]. Probably composed in 1550.
- 26a. Selections from Becon's Flower of Godly Prayers, etc., pub. in The Book of Private Devotions; containing a collection of the most valuable early devotions of the Reformers and their successors, in the English Church.... ed. the Revd. E. Bickersteth, London, 1839. 8<sup>o</sup>.
- \* 27. The Principles of Christen Religion necessary to be knowen of the faythfull... J. Daye: London, [? 1550]. 8<sup>o</sup>. [STC 1751].
- 27a. another edition — as above [? 1552]. [STC 1752].
- 27b. another edition — as above, 1569. [STC 1753].
- \* 28. The Castell of Comforte, in the whiche it is euidently proued, y<sup>t</sup> God alone absolueth, and freli forgeueth the sinnes of so many as vnfaynedly repent and turne vnto hym, etc. Ihon Daye & William Seres: London, [? 1550], 16mo. [STC 1712].
- \* 29. The Fortresse of the faythfull agaynst ye cruel assautes of pouertie and hunger newlye made for the comforte of poore nedye Christians. Iohn Daye & William Seres: London, 1550. 8<sup>o</sup>. [STC 1721].

- \* § 30. Latin poem appended to A Preseruatiue, or Triacle, agaynst the poyson of Pel-agius, by Wm. Turner. [R. Jugge] for A. Hester, 1551. 8°. [STC 24368].
  
- \* 31. A fruitfull treatise of fasting... J. Day: London, [? 1552]. [Folio ed. title: A fruitfull treatise of fasting, wherin is declared what ye Christen fast is, how we ought to fast, & what the true use of fasting is]. [STC 1722].
  - 31a. ? another edition — A treatise of fasting, by T.B. — see Ames, Typ. Ant., iv, p.156.
  
- † 32. The Christian Knight. [folio ed, title: The Christen knighte teaching the Warriars of God not knely how they must preuaile against Satan and his wicked army in this worlde, but also how they may liue before God with a quiet and mery conscience].
  
- † 33. The Pomaunder of prayer. Composed before 1553. Publication date of the first ed. unknown.
  - 33a. The Pomāder of Prayer. Wherein is contained many godly Prayers, whereunto are added certayne Meditations called S. Augustines, which, beýng redde with a feruent mynde, wyll profyt much, and stur thee to vertue (The xv Ooes. The Letanie). London, 1558. 8°. [STC 1744].
  - 33b. another edition, with portrait. John Daye: Lōdon, [? 1560]. 8°. [STC 1745].
  - 33c. another edition, with portrait. as 33b, 1561. [STC 1746].
  - 33d. another edition, John Daye: London, 1565. 8°. [STC 1747].

- 33e. another edition, The Pommander of Prayers. J. Daye: London, 1578.  
8°. [STC 1748].
- 33f. another edition, in Bickersteth's  
Book of Private Devotions, see  
26a.
- † 34. The Sick Man's Salve. Composed before  
1553; it cannot be ascertained whether  
the ed. of 1561 is the first or not.  
[folio ed. title: The Sycke Mans Salve,  
wherin the faithfull Christians may  
learne both how to behaue themselves  
patiently and thankefully in the tyme  
of syckness and also vertuously to  
dispose their temporall goodes and fin-  
ally to prepare themselves gladly and  
godly to dye].
- 34a. The Sycke Mans Salve. Wherin the  
faithfull christians may learne  
both how to behaue them selues  
patiently and thankfully, in the  
tyme of sickenes, etc. [portrait].  
[J. Day: London], 1561. 8°. [STC  
1757].
- 34b. another edition. Ihon Day: London,  
1565. 8°.
- 34c. another edition. J. Day: London,  
1568. [STC 1758].
- 34d. another edition. J. Day: London,  
1570. 8°. [STC 1759].
- 34e. another edition. J. Daye: London,  
1572. 8°. [STC 1760].
- 34f. another edition. Iohn Daye: London,  
1574. 8°. [STC 1761].
- 34g. another edition. 1577. [STC 1762].
- 34h. another edition. [? London, ? 1580].

- 34i. another edition. Thomas Vautroullier:  
Edinburgh, 1584. 8<sup>o</sup>. [STC 1763].
- 34j. another edition. Printed by the As-  
signes of Richard Daye: London,  
1585. 8<sup>o</sup>. [STC 1764].
- 34k. another edition. Printed by P.Short  
for the Assignes of R.Day: London,  
1594. 8<sup>o</sup>. [STC 1765].
- 34l. another edition. Salve for a sicke  
man. Cambridge, 1595. 8<sup>o</sup>.  
[STC 1766].
- 34m. another edition. Printed for the  
Company of the Stationers: London,  
1601. 8<sup>o</sup>. [STC 1767].
- 34n. another edition. as 34m. 1604. 8<sup>o</sup>.  
[STC 1768].
- 34o. another edition. as 34m. 1607. 8<sup>o</sup>.  
[STC 1769].
- 34p. another edition. 1611. [STC 1770].
- 34q. another edition. Edbg.A.Hart, 1613.  
8<sup>o</sup>. [STC 1771].
- 34r. another edition. as 34m. [16(3)1],  
8<sup>o</sup>. [STC 1772].
- 34 s. another edition. as 34m. 1632. 8<sup>o</sup>.  
[STC 1773].

† § ¶ 35. Preparaciones ad eucharistiam: incipit -  
"Primo notandum est, quod omnia..."  
See Bale, Index, fol.172, Poole and  
Bateson ed. p.430.



- † § ¶ 36. Bale, Index, fol.172 — Poole and Bateson ed. p.430, mentions Olfactorium spirituale, with the incipit, "Legitur in tertio libro Regum". This is neither the Nosegay (no.6) nor the Pomander (no.33), and may be Turner's Spiritual Nosegay ascribed to Becon in error — see Foxe, v, p.567.
37. The c.iii Psalme made in Englishe Meter, by Thomas Becon, for a thankesgeving unto God, immediately after hys deliveraunce out of prison, whose emprysonmente began the 16.day of August, the yeare of our Lord 1553, and ended the 22.of Marche, then next ensuing. First published in volume iii of the folio ed. November 1563.
38. Psalm cxii rendered into English verse. Though undated, this appears to belong to the same time as no.37.
- \* 39. A comfortable Epistle, too Goddes faythfull people in Englande, wherein is declared the cause of takynge awaye the true Christen religion from them, & howe it maye be recouered and obtayned agayne, etc. At the signe of the golde Bibel: Strasburgh. [H.Singleton: London], 1554. 8<sup>o</sup>. [STC 1716]. Preface in folio ed. 6 October 1563.
- \* 40. An humble supplicacion vnto God, for the restoringe of hys holye woorde, vnto the church of Englande. [anon]. Strasburg in Elsas. [London: H.Singleton], 1544 [sic STC 1730: actually 1554]. 8<sup>o</sup>.
- § \* 41. Anthologia Lactantii Firmiani elegantissimas sententias, easque tam pietate, quam doctrina illustres, complectus: recenter in locos digesta communes per Thomam Beconum. Lugduni apud Clementem Baudinum, 1558; colophon, Marburg, 1557; ded. to Alexander Nowell. 8<sup>o</sup>. [A copy in the Cosin Library, Durham University].

- † 42. The Displayeng of the popishe Masse:  
wherein thou shalt see, what a wicked  
Idol the Masse is, and what great  
difference there is betwene the Lordes  
Supper and the Popes Masse: Again what  
Popes brought in every part of the  
Masse, and counted it together in such  
monstrous sort, as it is now used in  
y<sup>e</sup> Popes kyngdome. [folio ed. title].

[42a. Lowndes, Bibl. Manual i, p.143,  
mentions an edition in Latin, Basle,  
1559.].

42b. another edition. Printed by A.G.  
[Anne Griffin], for the Company of  
Stationers: London, 1637. 12mo.  
[STC 1719].

- § \* 43. Coenae Sacrosanctae Domini nostri, &  
Missae Papisticae, Comparatio, etc.  
pp.253. Ex Officina I.Oporini: Basileae,  
1559. 8°. [see no.56].

- † § ¶ 44. Introductionem ad pietatem.  
† § ¶ 45. Locorum communium sylvulam.  
† § ¶ 46. Gnomothecam Salomonis.  
† § ¶ 47. Sententias Iobi, David, et Tobiae.  
† § ¶ 48. Miscellanea religionis.  
† § ¶ 49. De autoritate verbi Dei.  
† § ¶ 50. De oratione homelias aliquot.  
† § ¶ 51. Iosuae Syrachii gnomologiam.  
† § ¶ 52. Xenophontis flosculos.

Nos.44-52 are listed by Bale, Catalog-  
us, p.757; he introduces them with  
the words, "In Germania Latine con-  
gessit...." These works must have  
been published on the Continent  
prior to 1557, the date of the Cata-  
logus. Bale's list also includes  
no.41. None of these was subsequent-  
ly translated into English or pub-  
lished in England.

53. A new Catechisme set forth Dialoge wise in famillare talke betwene the father and the son. Composed 1559-1560 and first published in the folio edition.
54. The booke of Matrimony both profitable and comfortable for all them that entende quietly and godly to lyue in the holy state of honourable wedlocke. Probably composed at the same time as no.53 (except the preface, which is identical with no 10, apart from a new final paragraph).
55. The Common places of the holy Scripture: containing certayne articles of Christen religion, moste necessary to be knownen of all true Christians in this Wicked and troublous time, both for y<sup>e</sup> purenesse of the doctrine, and for the quietnesse of their conscience. Preface dated 10 June 1562; first published in the folio edition.
56. A Comparison betwene the Lordes Supper, and the Popes Masse. A free rendering into English, with additions, and the omission of the catenae of Patristic authorities, of no.43. First published in the folio edition.
- \* 57. Certayne Articles of Christen Religion, proued and confirmed with the testimonies and autorities of the auncient fathers againste all suche errors and heresies as the Papistes haue brought into the Churche, aboute the doctrine of the Sacrament of the body and bloud of Christ. First published in the folio edition.
- \* 58. The Monstruous Marchandise of the Romish Bishops whereunto is added the judgement of certen learned men concerninge Rome and the state thereof, and what

is to be thought of the Bishop of Rome, his authoritye and primacye. First published in the folio edition. The latter part of this treatise is the "old book made by Becon entitled Reports of Certain Men" to which Strype refers, see Cranmer, p.244 and pp.795-799, App.XXXIX.

- \* 59. The reliques of Rome. J. Day: London, [1560 ?]. 8°. [STC 1754].

59a. The Reliques of Rome, contayning all such matters of Religion, as have in times past bene brought into the Church by the Pope and his adherentes: faithfully gathered out of the most faithful writers of Chronicles and Histories, and now newly both diligently corrected and greatly augmented, to the singuler profit of the Readers, by Thomas Becon, 1563. Preface dated 6 June 1563. [This is no doubt the edition mentioned by Lowndes, op.cit., i, p.143; he gives as the date, 1553, which is certainly a mistake].

- \* 60. The Diuersitie betweene God's worde and Mannes inuentions. First published in the folio edition. A free version of Francois Lambert's Antithesis verbi dei & inventorū hominum.

60a. The Diversity between God's Word and Man's Invention, etc. Tercentenary Tracts; or Tracts written by British Reformers. 1835. 12mo.

- \* 61. The Actes of Christe & of Antichrist, concerning both their life and doctrine. First published in the folio edition.



- 61a. another edition. The Actes of Christe and of Antichriste, concernyng bothe their life and doctrines: diligently gathered and now taken out of his workes by T. Becon. Ihon Daie: London, 1577. 8<sup>o</sup>.
- \* 62. Christes Chronicle, contayning brieflye in a most goodly and pleasaunt order whatsoever is written at large in the Gospels of the foure Euangelistes. First published in the folio edition.
- \* 63. The Summarie of the New Testament orderly and briefly declaryng the contentes of every Chapter thorow out the whole Boke. First published in the folio edition.
- \* 64. The Demandes of holy Scripture with answers to the same, wherein are defined and declared the chiefe and principal points of Christian doctrine: verye profitable for the right understanding of the holy Scriptures. First published in the folio edition. Preface dated 1 September 1563.
- 64a. another edition. The Demaundes of Holy Scripture, with answeres to the same, wherein are defined and declared the cheefe and principall poyntes of Christian doctrine, etc., Iohn Day: London. 1577. 8<sup>o</sup>.
- \* 65. The Glorious triumphe of Gods most blessed word. First published in the folio edition. Preface dated 6 October 1563.
- \* 66. The prayse of Death, set forth in a dialogue betwene man and Reason. First published in the folio edition.
- § 67. Letter to Archbishop Parker. Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, MSS - M.R. James's Catalogue, item 302 in MS 114.



68. The workes of Thomas Becon, which he hath hytherto made and published, with diuerse other newe Bookes added to the same, heretofore neuer set forth in print diuided into thre tomes or parts diligently perused, corrected, and amended: and now finished this present of our Lord, 1564. 3 vols, folio. Iohn Day: London, 1560, 1563, and 1564.

68a. The Works of Thomas Becon, edited for the Parker Society by the Revd. John Ayre, M.A.

Vol. I: Early Works, Cambridge, 1843.

Vol. II: Catechism and other pieces, Cambridge, 1844.

Vol. III: Prayers and other pieces, Cambridge, 1844.

[From this edition the following are omitted: nos. 1, 10-12, 15, 17, 19-21, 23, 25, 30, 35-36, 41, 43-52, 54, 58-59, 65-66, and 69. No. 67 is printed in the Preface.]

§ 69. A New Postil Conteinyng most Godly and learned sermons upon all the Sunday Gospelles, that be redde in the Church throwout the yeare: lately set foorth unto the great profite not onely of al Curates, and spirituall Ministers, but also of all other godly & Faythfull Readers. 2 vols. 4to. Thomas Marshe: London, 1566. [STC 1736].

69a. another edition. as above, 1567. 4to. [STC 1737].

69b. Faith in Christ; the Gospel for Whit-Monday, from Postils by Thomas Becon, in The Testimony of the Reformers, by the Revd. E. Bickersteth, London, 1836.

## B. WORKS ATTRIBUTED TO BECON

1. Christian Prayers and Godly Meditations upon the Epistle of St. Paul to the Romans, attributed to Becon by Tanner, p.86, who describes it: "ex Italico. Pr. ded. magistro T.M. 'Of how great efficacy virtue'. dat. Shenae, 12 Febr. MDL.; Lond. MDLXIX. 24to." This cannot be traced, and is not listed in STC.
2. English verses prefixed to The eyght tragedie of Seneca: Agamemnon. Tr. John Studley. T. Colwell, 1566, 8°. [STC 22222]. The poem is signed T.B., but internal evidence is against authorship by Becon.
3. At the end of the translation of the Psalms included in the 'Bishops' Bible' published in 1572 occur the initials T.B. which, says Strype, "perhaps designate Thomas Becon". (Parker, ii, p.222). There is no supporting evidence for this attribution.

## C. ANTHOLOGIES &amp;c.

1. Prayers, by Thomas Becon (Selections from the Writings of the Reformers and Fathers of the Church of England, No.6), S.P.C.K.: London, 1836, 12mo. A reprint of various prayers.
2. The Writings of the Rev. Thomas Becon, R.T.S.: London, [? 1830]. Selections from Becon's works; 12mo.
3. Becon's Golden Saying [a religious tract]. J.Groom: Birmingham [? 1855], 8°.

## II

WORKS QUOTED OR MENTIONED  
IN THE COURSE OF THIS STUDY

In every case the edition given is that to which reference has been made.

AMES, JOSEPH: Typographical Antiquities, ed. Dibdin, London, 1819.

ARBER, E.: Transcript of the Registers of the Company of Stationers, London, 1875.  
(ed.) — A Brief Discourse of the Troubles at Frankfort, London, 1908.

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